The Castlecourt Diamond Case

by Geraldine Bonner

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THE CASTLECOURT DIAMOND CASE

SHE MADE A SORT OF GRASP AT THE CASE

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SHE MADE A SORT OF SNATCH AT THE CASE.

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The Castlecourt Diamond Case

BEING A COMPILATION OF THE STATEMENTS MADE BY THE VARIOUS PARTICIPANTS IN THIS CURIOUS CASE NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME, GIVEN TO THE PUBLIC :: :: ::

By

GERALDINE BONNER
Author of "Hard Pan," "The Pioneers," etc.

FRONTISPIECE ILLUSTRATION
BY
HARRIE F. STONER

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by
GERALDINE BONNER

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TO WILL
ALBERTA

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Statement of Sophy Jeffers, lady's maid to the Marchioness of Castlecourt. : : : : : : : : : : :

I HAD been in Lady Castlecourt's service two years when the Castlecourt diamonds were stolen. I am not going to give an account of how I was suspected and cleared. That's not the part of the story I'm here to set down. It's about the disappearance of the diamonds that I'm to tell, and I'm ready to do it to the best of my ability.

We were in London, at Burridge's Hotel, for the season. Lord Castlecourt's town house at Grosvener Gate was let to some rich Americans, and for two years now we had stayed at Burridge's. It was

the third of April when we came to town—my lord, my lady, Chawlmers (my lord's man), and myself. The children had been sent to my lord's aunt, Lady Mary Cranbury—she who's unmarried, and lives at Cranbury Castle, near Worcester.

Lord Castlecourt didn't like going to the hotel at all. Chawlmers used to tell me how he'd talk sometimes. Chawlmers has been with my lord ten years, and was born on the estate of Castlecourt Marsh Manor. But my lord generally did what my lady wanted, and she was not at all partial to the country. She'd say to me—she was always full of her jokes:

"Yes, it's an excellent place, the country—an excellent place to get away from, Jeffers. And the farther

away you get the more excellent it seems."

My lady had been born in Ireland, and lived there till she was a woman grown. It's not for me to comment on my betters, but I've heard it said she didn't have a decent frock to her back till old Lady Bundy took her up and brought her to London. Her father was a clergyman, the Rev. McCarren Duffy, of County Clare, and they do say he hadn't a penny to his fortune, and that my lady ran wild in cotton frocks and with holes in her stockings till Lady Bundy saw her. I've heard tell that Lady Bundy said of her she'd be the most beautiful woman in London since the Gunnings (whoever they were), and just brought her up to town and fitted her out from top to toe. In a month she

was the talk of the season, and before it was over she was betrothed to the Marquis of Castlecourt, who was a great match for her.

But she was the beggar on horseback you hear people talk about. Lord Castlecourt wasn't what would be called a millionaire, but he gave her more in a month than she'd had before in five years, and she'd spend it all and want more. It seemed as if she didn't know the value of money. If she'd see a pretty thing in a shop she'd buy it, and if she had not got the ready money they'd give her the credit; for, being the Marchioness of Castlecourt, all the shop people were on their knees to her, they were that anxious to get her patronage. Then when the bills would come in she would be quite

surprised and wonder how she had come to spend so much, and hide them from Lord Castlecourt. Afterward she'd forget all about them, even where she'd put them.

Lord Castlecourt was so fond of her he'd have forgiven her anything. They'd been married five years when I entered my lady's service, and he was as much in love with her as if he'd been married but a month. And I don't blame him. She was the prettiest lady, and the most coaxing, I ever laid eyes on. She might well be Irish: there was blarney on her tongue for all the world, and money ready to drop off the ends of her fingers into any palm that was held out. There was no story of misfortune but would bring the tears to her eyes and her purse to her hand:

generous and soft hearted she was to every creature that walked. No one could be angry with her long. I've seen Lord Castlecourt begin to scold her, and end by laughing at her and kissing her. Not but what she respected him and loved him. She did both, and she was afraid of him too. No one knew better than my lady when it was time to stop trifling with my lord and be serious.

It was Lord Castlecourt's custom to go to Paris two or three times every year. He had a sister married there of whom he was very fond, and he and her husband would go off shooting boars to a place with a name I can't remember. My lady was always happy to go to Paris. She'd say she loved it, and the theaters, and the shops—tho what she

could see in it *I* never understood. A dirty, messy city, and full of men ready to ogle an honest, Christian woman, as if she was what half the women look like that go prancing along the streets. My lady spent a good deal of her time at the dressmakers, and she and I were forever going up to top stories in little, silly lifts that go up of themselves. I'd a great deal rather have walked than trusted myself to such unsafe, French contrivances—underhand, dangerous things, that might burst at any moment, *I* say.

The year before the time I am writing of we went to Paris, as usual, in March. We stopped at the Bristol, and stayed one month. My lady went out a great deal, and betweenwhiles was, as usual, at what they

call there *"couturières',"* at the jewelers', or the shops on the Rue de la Paix. She also bought from Bolkonsky, the furrier, a very smart jacket of Russian sable that I'll be bound cost a pretty penny. When we went back to London for the season her beauty and her costumes were the talk of the town. Old Lady Bundy's maid told me that Lady Bundy went about saying: "And but for me, she'd be the mother of the red-headed larrykins of an Irish squireen!" Which didn't seem to me nice talk for a lady.

We spent that summer at Castlecourt Marsh Manor very quietly, as was my lord's wish. My lady did not seem in as good spirits as usual, which I set down to the country life that she always said bored her. Once

or twice she told me that she felt ill, which I'd never known her to say before, and one day in the late summer I discoverd her in tears. She did not seem to be herself again till we went to Paris in September. Then she brightened up, and was soon in higher spirits than ever. She was on the go continually—often would go out for lunch, and not be back till it was time to dress for dinner. She enjoyed herself in Paris very much, she told me. And I think she did, for I never saw her more animated—almost excited with high spirits and success.

The following spring we left Castlecourt Marsh Manor, and, as I said before, came to Burridge's on April the third. The season was soon in full swing, and my lady was going out

morning, noon, and night. There was no end to it, and I was worn out. When she was away in the afternoon I'd take forty winks on the sofa, and have Sara Dwight, the housemaid of our rooms, bring me a cup of tea, when she'd sometimes take one herself, and we'd gossip a bit over it.

If I'd known what an important person Sara Dwight was going to turn out I'd have taken more notice of her. But, unfortunately, thieves don't have a mark on their brow like Cain, and Sara was the last girl any one would have suspected was dishonest. All that I ever thought about her was that she was a neat, civil-spoken girl, who knew her betters and her elders when she saw them. She was quick on her feet,

modest and well mannered — not what you'd call good-looking: too pale and small for my taste, and Chawlmers quite agreed with me. The one thing I noticed about her were her hands, which were white and fine like a lady's. Once when I asked her how she kept them so well, she laughed, and said, not having a pretty face, she tried to have pretty hands.

"Because a girl ought to have something pretty about her, oughtn't she, Miss Jeffers?" she said to me, quiet and respectful as could be.

I answered, as I thought it was my duty, that beauty was only skin deep, and if your character was honest your face would take care of itself.

She looked down at her hands, and smiled a little and said:

"Yes, I suppose that's true, Miss Jeffers. I'll try to remember it. It's what every girl ought to feel, I'm sure."

Sara Dwight had the greatest admiration for Lady Castlecourt. She'd manage to be standing about in doorways and on the stairs when my lady passed down to go to dinner and to the opera. Then she'd come back and tell me how beautiful my lady was, and how she envied me being her maid. While she was talking she'd help me tidy up the room, and sometimes—because she admired my lady so—I'd let her look at the new clothes from Paris as they hung in the wardrobe. Sara would gape with admiration over

them. She spoke a little about my lady's jewels, but not much. I'd have suspected that.

It was in the fifth week after we came to town—to be exact, on the afternoon of the fourth day of May—that the diamonds were stolen. As I'd been so badgered and questioned and tormented about it, I've got it all as clear in my head as a photograph—just how it was and just what time everything happened.

That evening my lady was going to dinner at the Duke of Duxbury's. It was to be a great dinner—a prince and a prime minister, and I don't know what all besides. My lady was to wear a new gown from Paris and the diamonds. She told me when she went out what she would want and when she would be back. That was

at four, and I was not to expect her in till after six.

Some time before that I got her things ready, the gown laid out, and the diamonds on the dressing-table. They were kept in a leather case of their own, and then put in a despatch-box that shut with a patent lock. When we traveled I always carried this box—that is, when my lady used it. A good deal of the time it was at the bankers'. Lord Castlecourt was very choice about the diamonds. Some of them had been in his family for generations. The way they were set now—in a necklace with pendants, the larger stones surrounded by smaller ones—had been a new setting made for his mother. My lady wanted them changed, and I remember that Lord

Castlecourt was vexed with her, and she couldn't pet and coax him back into a good humor for some days.

One of the last things that I did that afternoon while arranging the dressing-table was to open the despatch-box and take the leather case out. Tho it was May, and the evenings were very long, I turned on the electric lights, and, unclasping the case, looked at the necklace.

I was standing this way when Chawlmers comes to the side door of the room (the whole suite was connected with doors), and asks me if I could remember the number of the bootmakers where my lady bought her riding-boots. Some friend of Chawlmers wanted to know the address. I couldn't at first remember it, and I was standing this

way, trying to recollect, when I heard the clock strike six. I told Chawlmers I'd get it for him. I was certain it was in my lady's desk, and I put the case down on the bureau, and Chawlmers and I together went into the sitting-room (the door open between us and my lady's room) and looked for it. We found it in a minute, and Chawlmers was writing it down in his pocket-book when I thought I heard (so light and soft you could hardly say you'd heard anything) a rustle like a woman's skirt in the next room. For a second I thought it was my lady, and I jumped, for I'd no business at her desk, and I knew she'd be vexed and scold me.

Chawlmers didn't hear a thing, and looked at me astonished. Then

I ran to the door and peeped in. There was no one there, and I thought, of course, I'd been mistaken.

We didn't leave the room directly, but stood by the desk talking for a bit. When I told this to the detectives, one of the papers said it showed "how deceptive even the best servants were." As if a valet and a lady's maid couldn't stop for a moment of talk! Poor things! we work hard enough most of the time, I'm sure. And that we weren't long standing there idle can be seen from the fact that I heard half-past six strike. I was for urging Chawlmers to go then—as Lady Castlecourt might be in at any moment—but he hung about, following me into my lady's room, helping me draw the

curtains and turn on all the lights, for my lady can't bear to dress by daylight.

It was nearly seven o'clock when we heard the sound of her skirts in the passage. Chawlmers slipped off into his master's rooms, shutting the door quietly behind him. My lady was looking very beautiful. She had on a blue hat trimmed with blue and gray hydrangeas, and underneath it her hair was like spun gold, and her eyes looked soft and dark. It never seemed to tire her to be always on the go. But I'd thought lately she'd been going too much, for sometimes she was pale, and once or twice I thought she was out of spirits—the way she'd been in the country last summer.

She seemed so to-night, not talk-

ing as much as usual. There were some letters for her on the corner of the dressing-table, and I could see her face in the glass as she read them. One made her smile, and then she sat thinking and biting her lip, which was as red as a cherry. She seemed to me to be preoccupied. When I was making the side *"ondulations"* of her hair—which everybody knows is a most critical operation—she jerked her head, and said suddenly she wondered how the children were. I never before knew my lady to think about the children when her hair was being attended to.

She was sitting in front of the dressing-table, her toilet complete, when she stretched out her hand to the leather case of the diamonds. I was looking at the reflection in the

mirror, thinking that she was as perfect as I could make her. She, too, had been looking at the back of her head, and still held the small glass in one hand. The other she reached out for the diamonds. The case had a catch that you had to press, and I saw, to my surprise, that she raised the lid without pressing this. Then she gave a loud exclamation. There were no diamonds there!

She turned round and looked at me, and said:

"How odd! Where are they, Jeffers?"

I felt suddenly as if I was going to fall dead, and afterward, when my lady stood by me and said it was nonsence to suspect me, one of the things she brought up as a proof of my innocence was the color I turned

and the way I looked at that moment.

"Jeffers!" she said, suddenly rising up quick out of her chair. And then, without my saying a word, she went white and stood staring at me.

"My lady, my lady," was all I could falter out, "I don't know—I don't know!"

"Where are they, Jeffers? What's happened to them?"

My voice was all husky like a person's with a cold, as I stammered:

"They were in the case an hour ago."

My lady caught me by the arm, and her fingers gripped tight into my flesh.

"Don't say they're stolen, Jeffers!" she cried out. "Don't tell me that! Lord Castlecourt would never

forgive me. He'll never forgive me! They're worth thousands and thousands of pounds! They *can't* have been stolen!"

She spoke so loud they heard her in the next room, and Lord Castlecourt came in. He was a tall gentleman, a little bald, and I can see him now in his black clothes, with the white of his shirt bosom gleaming, standing in the doorway looking at her. He had a surprised expression on his face, and was frowning a little; for he hated anything like loud talking or a scene.

"What's the matter, Gladys?" he said. "You're making such a noise I heard you in my room. Is there a fire?"

She made a sort of grasp at the case, and tried to hide it. Chawl-

mers was in the doorway behind my lord, and I saw him staring at her and trying not to. He told me afterward she was as white as paper.

"The diamonds," she faltered out —"your diamonds—your family's—your mother's."

Lord Castlecourt gave a start, and seemed to stiffen. He did not move from where he was, but stood rigid, looking at her.

"What's the matter with them?" he said, quick and quiet, but not as if he was calm.

She threw the case she had been trying to hide on the dressing-table. It knocked over some bottles, and lay there open and empty. My lord sprang at it, took it up, and shook it.

"Gone?" he said, turning to my lady. "Stolen, do you mean?"

"Yes—yes—yes," she said, like that—three times; and then she fell back in the chair and put her hands over her face.

Lord Castlecourt turned to me.

"What's this mean, Jeffers? You've had charge of the diamonds."

I told him all I knew and as well as I could, what with my legs trembling that they'd scarce support me, and my tongue dry as a piece of leather. When I got toward the end, my lady interrupted me, crying out:

"Herbert, it isn't my fault, it isn't! Jeffers will tell you I've taken good care of them. I've not been careless or forgetful about them, as I have about other things. I *have* been careful of them! It isn't my fault, and you mustn't blame me!"

Lord Castlecourt made a sort of

gesture toward her to be still. I could see it meant that. He kept the case, and, going to the door, locked it.

"How long have you been in these rooms?" he said, turning round on me with the key in his hand.

I told him, trembling, and almost crying. I had never seen my lord look so terribly stern. I don't know whether he was angry or not, but I was afraid of him, and it was for the first time; for he'd always been a kind and generous master to me and the other servants.

"Oh, my lord," I said, feeling suddenly weighed down with dread and misery, "you surely don't think I took them?"

"I'm not thinking anything," he said. "You and Chawlmers are to

stay in this room, and not move from it till you get my orders. I'll send at once for the police."

My lady turned round in her chair and looked at him.

"The police?" she said. "Oh, Herbert, wait till to-morrow! You're not even sure yet that they are stolen."

"Where are they, then?" he says, quick and sharp. "Jeffers says she saw them in that case an hour ago. They are not in the case now. Do either you or she know where they are?"

I was down on my knees, picking up the bottles that had been knocked over by the empty jewel-case.

"Not I, God knows," I said, and I began to cry.

"The matter must be put in the

hands of the police at once," my lord said. "I'll have the hotel policeman here in a few minutes, and the rooms searched. Jeffers and Chawlmers and their luggage will be searched to-morrow."

My lady gave a sort of gasp. I was close to her feet, and I heard her. But, for myself, I just broke down, and, kneeling on the floor with the overturned bottles spilling cologne all around me, cried worse than I've done since I was in short frocks.

"Oh, my lady, I didn't take them! I didn't! You know I didn't!" I sobbed out.

My lady looked very miserable.

"My poor Jeffers," she said, and put her hand on my shoulder, "I'm sure you didn't. If I'd only a six-

pence in the world I'd stake that on your honesty."

Lord Castlecourt didn't say anything. He went to the bell and pressed it. When the boy answered it he gave him a message in a low tone, and it didn't seem five minutes before two men were in the room. I did not know till afterward that one was the manager, and the other the hotel policeman. I stopped my crying the best I could, and heard my lord telling them that the diamonds were gone, and that Chawlmers and I had been the only people in the room all the afternoon. Then he said he wanted them to communicate at once with Scotland Yard, and have a capable detective sent to the hotel.

"Lady Castlecourt and I are going

to dinner," he said, looking at his watch. "We will have to leave, at the latest, within the next twenty minutes."

Lady Castlecourt cried out at that:

"Herbert, I don't see how I can go to that dinner. I am altogether too upset, and, besides, it will be too late. It's eight o'clock now."

"We can make the time up in the carriage," my lord said; and he went into the next room with the policeman, where they talked together in low voices. I helped my lady on with her cloak, and she stood waiting, her eyebrows drawn together, looking very pale and worried. When my lord came back he said nothing, only nodded to my lady

that he was ready, and, without a word, they left the room.

I tried to tidy the bureau and pick up the bottles as well as I could, and every time I looked at the door into the sitting-room I saw that policeman's head peering round the doorpost at me.

That was an awful night. I did not know it till afterward, but both Chawlmers and I were under what they call "surveillance." I did not know either that Lord Castlecourt had told the policeman he believed us to be innocent; that we were of excellent character, and nothing but positive proof would make him think either of us guilty. All I felt, as I tossed about in bed, was that I was suspected, and would be arrested and probably put in jail. Fifteen years

of honest service in noble families wouldn't help me much if the detectives took it into their heads I was guilty.

The next morning we heard about the disappearance of Sara Dwight, and things began to look brighter. Sara had left the hotel at a little after seven the evening before, speaking to no one, and carrying a small portmanteau. When they came to examine her room and her box they found a jacket and skirt hanging on the wall, some burnt papers in the grate, and the box almost empty, except for some cheap cotton underclothes and a dirty wadded quilt put in to fill up. Sara had given no notice, and had not at any time told any of her fellow servants

that she was dissatisfied with her place or wanted to leave.

That morning Mr. Brison, the Scotland Yard detective, had us up in the sitting-room asking us questions till I was fair muddled, and didn't know truth from lies. Lord Castlecourt and my lady were both present, and Mr. Brison was forever politely asking my lady questions till she got quite angry with him, and said she wasn't at all sure the diamonds were stolen; they might have been mislaid, and would turn up somewhere. Mr. Brison was surprised, and asked my lady if she had any idea where they were liable to turn up; and my lady looked annoyed, and said it was a silly question, and that she "wasn't a clairvoyant."

Three days after this Mr. John Gilsey, who is a detective, and, I have heard since, a very famous gentleman, was engaged by Lord Castlecourt to "work upon the case." Mr. Gilsey was very soft-spoken and pleasant. He did not muddle you, as Mr. Brison did, and it was very easy to tell him all you knew or could remember, which he always seemed anxious to hear. He had me up in the sitting-room twice, once alone and once with Mr. Brison, and they asked me a host of questions about Sara Dwight. I told them all I could think of; and when I came to her hands, and how they were white and fine, like a lady's, I saw Mr. Brison look at Mr. Gilsey and raise his eyebrows.

"Does it seem to you," he says,

scribbling words in his note-book, "that this sounds like Laura the Lady?"

And Mr. Gilsey answered:

"The manner of operating sounds like her, I must admit."

"She was in Chicago when last heard of," says Mr. Brison, stopping in his scribbling, "but we've information within the last week that she's left there."

"Laura the Lady is in London," Mr. Gilsey remarked, looking at his finger nails. "I saw her three weeks ago at Earlscourt."

Mr. Brison got red in the face and puffed out his lips, as if he was going to say something, but decided not to. He scribbled some more, and then, looking at what he had written as if he was reading it over, says:

"If that's the case, there's very little doubt as to who planned and executed this robbery."

"That's a very comfortable state of affairs to arrive at," says Mr. Gilsey, "and I hope it's the correct one." And that was all he said that time about what he thought.

After this we stayed on at Burridge's for the rest of the season, but it was not half as cheerful or gay as it had been before. My lord was often moody and cross, for he felt the loss of the diamonds bitterly; and my lady was out of spirits and moped, for she was very fond of him, and to have him take it this way seemed to upset her. Mr. Brison or Mr. Gilsey were constantly popping in and murmuring in the sitting-room, but they got no further on—at least,

there was no talk of finding the diamonds, which was all that counted.

This is all I know of the theft of the necklace. What happened at that time, and what Mr. Gilsey calls "the surrounding circumstances of the case," I have tried to put down as clearly and as simply as possible. I have gone over them so often, and been forced to be so careful, that I think they will be found to be quite correct in every particular.

Statement of Lilly Bingham, known in England as Laura Brice, in the United States as Frances Latimer, to the police of both countries as Laura the Lady, besides having recently figured as a housemaid at Burridge's Hotel, London, under the alias of Sara Dwight. : : : : : :

Statement of Lilly Bingham, known in England as Laura Brice, in the United States as Frances Latimer, to the police of both countries as Laura the Lady, besides having recently figured as a housemaid at Burridge's Hotel, London, under the alias of Sara Dwight. : : : : :

I NEVER was so glad of anything in my life as to get out of that beastly hole, Chicago. I'll certainly never go back there unless there is an inducement big enough to compensate for the elevated railroad, the lake, the noise, the winds, the restaurants, the climate, and the people. Ugh, what a nightmare!

England's the country for me, and London is the focus of it. You can live like a Christian here, and enjoy all the refinements and decencies of life for a reasonable consideration.

How my heart leaped when I saw the old, gray, sooty walls looming up through the river haze—I thought it best to sneak by the back way, because if I go up the front stairs and ring the bell there may be loiterers round who had seen Laura the Lady before, and might become impertinently curious about her future movements. And then when I saw Tom waiting for me—my own Tom, that I lawfully married, in a burst of affection, three years ago, at Leamington—I shouted out greetings, and danced on the deck, and waved my handkerchief. It was worth while having lived in Chicago for a year to come back to London and Tom and a little furnished flat in Knightsbridge.

We were very respectable and

quiet for a month—just a few callers climbing up the front stairs, and demure female tea-parties at intervals. I bought plants to put in the windows, and did knitting in a conspicuous solitude which the neighbors could overlook. When I saw the maiden lady opposite scrutinizing me through an opera-glass I felt like sending her my marriage certificate to run her eye over and return. We even hired a maid of all work from an agency as a touch of local color on this worthy domestic picture. But when the Castlecourt diamond scheme began to ripen I nagged at her till she was impudent and bundled her off. Maud Durlan came in then, put on a cap and apron, and played her part a good deal better than she used to when

she acted soubrettes in the vaudeville.

We were two weeks lying low, maturing our plans, tho when I left Chicago I knew what I was coming back for. Outwardly all was the same as usual—the decent callers still climbed the front stairs, and elderly ladies who, without any stretch of imagination, might have been my mother and aunts, dropped in for tea. I used to wonder how the people on the floor below—they were the family of a man who made rubber tires for bicycles—would have felt if they could have seen Maud, our neat and respectable slavy, sitting with the French heels of her slippers caught on the third shelf of the bookcase, dropping cigarette ashes into the waste-paper basket.

When all was ready, Tom and I left for a "business" trip on the Continent. We went away in a four-wheeler, driven by Handsome Harry, the top piled with luggage, my face at the window smiling a last, cautioning good-by at Maud. Five days later, under the name of Sara Dwight, I was installed as housemaid on the third floor of Burridge's Hotel.

I had done work of that kind before—once in New York, and at another time in Paris; having been born and spent my childhood in that cheerful city, my French is irreproachable. The famous robbery of the Comtesse de Chateaugay's rubies was my work—but I mustn't brag about past exploits. I had never been engaged in a hotel theft of the im-

portance of the Castlecourt one. The necklace was valued at between eight thousand and nine thousand pounds. The stones were not so remarkable for size as for quality. They were of an unusually even excellence and pure water.

After I had been in the hotel for a few days and watched the Castlecourt party, all apprehension left me, and I felt confident and cool. They were an extremely simple lay-out. Lady Castlecourt was a beauty —a seductive, smiling, white and gold person, without any sense at all. Her husband adored her. Being a man of some brains, that was what might have been expected. What might not have been expected was that she appeared to reciprocate his affection. Having made a care-

ful study of the manners and customs of the upper classes, I was not prepared for this. I note it as one of those exceptions to rule which occur now and then in the animal kingdom.

Besides the marquis and his lady, there were a maid and a valet to be considered. The former was a dense, honest woman named Sophy Jeffers, close on to forty, and of the unredeemed ugliness of the normal lady's maid. Such being the case, it was but natural to find that she was in love with Chawlmers, the valet, who was twenty-seven and good-looking. Jeffers was too truthful to tamper with her own age, but she did not feel it necessary to keep up the same rigid standard when it came to Chawlmers. It was less of

a lie to make him ten years older than herself ten years younger. From these facts I drew my deductions as to the sort of adversary Jeffers might be, and I found that, by a modest avoidance of Chawlmers' society, I could make her my lifelong friend.

The evening of the Duke of Duxbury's dinner was the time I decided upon as the most convenient for taking the stones. I had heard from Jeffers that the marquis and marchioness were going. When her ladyship left her rooms that afternoon I heard her tell Jeffers that she would not be back till after six, and to have everything ready at that hour. Off and on for the next two hours I was doing work about the corridor with a duster. It was near

six when I heard the two servants talking in the sitting-room. A bird's-eye view through the keyhole showed me where they were, and that they were engaged in searching for something in the desk. It was my chance. With my housemaid's pass-key I opened the door a crack, and peeped in. The leather case of the diamonds stood on the dressing-table not twenty feet from the door. It did not take five minutes to enter, open the case, take the necklace, and leave. Jeffers heard me. She was in the room almost as I closed the door. Before she could have got into the hall I was in the broom-closet hunting for a dust-pan. But she evidently suspected nothing, for the door did not open and there was no indication of disturbance.

Two days later Tom and I returned from our "business trip" to the Continent. I quite prided myself on the way our luggage was labeled. It had just the right knock-about, piebald look. We drove up in a four-wheeler, Handsome Harry on the box, and Maud opened the door for us. For the next few days we were quiet and kept indoors. We spent the time peacefully in the kitchen, breaking the settings of the diamonds and reading about the robbery in the papers. As soon as things simmered down, Tom was to take the stones across to Holland, where they would be distributed. We threw away the settings, and put the diamonds in a small box of chamois skin that I pinned to my corset with a safety-pin.

That was the way things were—untroubled as a summer sea—till ten days after our return, when I began to get restive. I had had what they call in America "a strenuous time" at Burridge's, working like a slave all day, with not a soul to speak to but a parcel of ignorant servant women, and I wanted livening up. I longed for the light and noise of Piccadilly, the crowd and the restaurants; but what I wanted particularly was to go to the theater and see a play called "The Forgiven Prodigal."

Maud and Tom raised a clamor of disapproval: What was the use of running risks? did I think, because I'd been in Chicago for nearly a year, that I was forgotten? did I think the men in Scotland Yard who

knew me were all dead? did I think the excitement of the Castlecourt robbery was over and done? I yawned at them, and then told them, with a gentle smile, that they were a "pusillanimous pair." There might be many men in Scotland yard who knew me, and that, as they say in Chicago, "is all the good it would do them." They couldn't arrest me for sitting peacefully at a theater looking at a play. As for connecting me with Sara Dwight, I would give any one a hundred pounds who, when I was dressed and had my war-paint on, would find in me a single suggestion of the late housemaid at Burridge's. So I talked them down; and if I didn't convince them of the reasonableness of my arguments, I

at least managed to soothe their fears.

I dressed myself with especial care, and when the last rite of my toilet was accomplished looked critically in the glass to see if anything of Sara Dwight remained. The survey contented me. Sara's mother, if there be such a person, would have denied me. I was all in black, a sweeping, spangly dress I had bought in New York, cut low, and my neck is not my weak point, especially when *crême des violettes* has been rubbed over it. My hair was waved (Maud does it very well, much better than she cooks, I regret to say), and dressed high, with a small red wreath of geraniums round it. Nose powdered to a probable, ladylike whiteness, a touch of

rouge, a tiny *mouche* near the corner of one eye, and long, black gloves—and, presto change! I wore no jewels—their owners might recognize them. One could hardly say I "wore" the Castlecourt diamonds, which were fastened to my corset with a safety-pin. They were rather uncomfortable, but they were the only thing about me that were.

As I stood in front of the glass putting on finishing touches, Maud left the room, and went to the drawing-room to watch for Handsome Harry, who was to drive our hansom. I did not like taking a hired driver, and, thank goodness, I didn't! I was putting a last *soupçon* of scarlet on my lips, when she came back, stepping softly, and with her eyes round and uneasy looking.

"I don't know whether I'm nervous," she says, "but there's a man just gone by in a hansom, and he leaned out and looked hard at our windows."

"I hope it amused him," I said, looking critically at my lips, to see if they were not a little too incredibly ruddy. "It's a harmless and innocent way of passing the time, so we mustn't be hard on him if it doesn't happen to be very intellectual. Come, help me on with my cloak, and don't stand there like Patience on a monument staring at thieves."

I was irritated with Maud, trying to upset my peace of mind that way. She'd had any amount of good times while I'd been at Burridge's with my nose to the grindstone. And here

she was, the first time I'd got a chance to have a spree, looking like a depressed owl and talking like the warning voice of Conscience! As she silently held up my cloak and I thrust my hand in the sleeve, I said, over my shoulder:

"And you needn't go upsetting Tom by telling him about strange men in hansoms who stare up at our front windows. I want to have a good time this evening, not feel that I'm sitting by a guilty being who jumps every time he's spoken to as if the curse of Cain was on him."

Maud said nothing, and I shook myself into my cloak and swept out to the hall, where Tom was waiting.

There had been a slight fog all afternoon, and now it was thick; not a "pea-soup" one, but a good, damp,

obscuring fog—a regular "burglar's delight." As we came down the steps we saw the two hansom lamps making blurs, like lights behind white cotton screens. Tom was grumbling about it and about going out generally as he helped me in. And just at that minute, still and quick, like a picture going across a magic-lantern slide, I saw a man on the other side of the street step out of the shadow of a porch, and glide swiftly and softly past the light of the lamp and up the street, to where the form of a waiting hansom loomed. It was all very simple and natural, but his walk was odd—so noiseless and stealthy.

I got in, and Tom followed me. He hadn't seen anything. For the moment I didn't speak of it, because

I wasn't sure. But I've got to admit that my heart beat against the Castlecourt diamonds harder than was comfortable. We started, and I listened, and faintly, some way behind us, I heard the *ker-lump!—ker-lump! —ker-lump!* of another horse's hoofs on the asphalt. I leaned forward over the door, and tried to look back. Through the mist I saw the two yellow eyes of the hansom behind us. Tom asked me what was the matter, and I told him. He whistled—a long, single note—then leaned back very steady and still. We didn't say anything for a bit, but just sat tight and listened.

It kept behind us that way for about ten minutes. Then I pushed up the trap, and said to Harry:

"What's this hansom behind us up to, Harry?"

"That's what I want to know," he says, quiet and low.

"Lose it, if you can, without being too much of a Jehu," I answered, and shut the trap.

He tried to lose it, and we began a chase, slow at first, and then faster and faster, down one street and up the other. The fog by this time was as thick and white as wool, and we seemed to break through it like a ship, as if we were going through something dense and hard to penetrate. It seemed to me, too, a maddeningly quiet night. There was no traffic, no noise of wheels to get mixed with ours. The *ker-lump!—ker-lump!* of our horse's hoofs came back as clear as sounds in a calm at

sea from the long lines of house fronts. And that devilish hansom never lost us. It kept just the same distance behind us. We could hear its horse's hoofs, like an echo of our own, beating through the fog. It got no nearer; it went no faster. It did not seem in a hurry, it never deviated from our track. There was something hideously unagitated and cool about it—a sort of deadly, sinister persistence. I saw it in imagination, like a live monster with bulging yellow eyes, staring with gloating greediness at us as we ran feebly along before it.

Tom didn't say much. He doesn't in moments like this. He's got the nerve all right, but not the brain. There's no inventive ability in Tom, he's not built for crises. Handsome

Harry now and then dropped some remark through the trap, which was like a trickle of icy water down one's spine. I began to realize that my lips were dry, and that the insides of my gloves were damp. I knew that whatever was to be done had to come from me. I'd got them into this, and, as they say in Chicago, "it was up to me" to get them out.

I leaned over the doors, and looked at the street we were going through. I know that part of London like a book—the insides of some of the houses as well as the outsides; it's a part of our business in which I'm supposed to be quite an expert. The street was a small one near Walworth Crescent, the houses not the smartest in the locality, but good, solid, reliable buildings inhabited by good, solid,

reliable people. The lower floors were all alight. It was the heart of the season, and in many of them there were dinners afoot. I thought, with a flash of longing—such as a drowning man might feel if he thought of suddenly finding himself on terra firma—of serene, smiling people sitting down to soup. I'd have given the Castlecourt diamonds at that moment to have been sitting down with them to cold soup, sour soup, greasy soup, any kind of soup —only to be sitting down to soup!

We turned a corner sharp, going now at a tearing pace, and I saw before us a length of street wrapped in fog, and blurred at regular intervals by the lights of lamps. It looked ghostlike—so white, so noiseless, lined on either side by dim house

fronts blotted with an indistinct sputter of lights. There was not a sound but our own horse's hoof-beats, and far off, like a noise muffled by cotton wool, the echo of our pursuer's. Through the opaque, motionless atmosphere I saw that the vista into which I stared was deserted. There was not a human figure or a vehicle in sight. It was a lull, a brief respite, a moment of incalculable value to us!

My mind was as clear as crystal, and I felt a sense of cool, high exhilaration. I have only felt this way in desperate moments, and this was a truly desperate moment—a pursuer on our heels and the diamonds in my possession!

I leaned over the doors, and looked up the line of houses. It was

Farley Street. Who lived in Farley Street? Suddenly I remembered that I knew all about the people who lived in No. 15. They were Americans named Kennedy—a man, his wife, and a little girl. He was manager of the London branch of a Chicago concern called the "Colonial Box, Tub, and Cordage Company," that I had often heard of in America. We had marked the house, and made extensive investigations before I left, intending to add it to our list, as Mrs. Kennedy had some handsome jewelry and silver. Since my return I had seen her name in the papers at various entertainments, and Maud had told me a lot about her social successes. She was pretty, and people were taking her up. All this—that it takes me some

minutes to tell—flashed through my mind in a revolution of the wheels.

I could see now that the windows of No. 15 were lit up. The Kennedys were evidently at home, perhaps had a dinner on. They, along with the rest of the world, would in a minute be sitting down to soup. They might be sitting down now; it was close on to half-past eight. Why could not we sit down with them?

I lifted the top, and said to Harry:

"Is the hansom round the corner yet?"

"No," he answered, "it's our only chance. They're still a bit behind us. I can tell by the sound."

"Drive to No. 15, second from the corner," I said, "and go as if the devil was after you."

I dropped the trap, and as we tore

down to No. 15 I spoke in a series of broken sentences to Tom.

"We're going in here to dinner. You must look as if it was all right. If we carry it off well, they won't dare to question. We're Major and Mrs. Thatcher, of the Lancers, that arrived Saturday from India. They're Americans, and won't know anything, so you can say about what you like. Give them India hot from the pan. I've been living in London while you've been away. That's how I come to know them and you don't. My Christian name's Ethel. Do the dull, heavy, haw-haw style. Americans expect it."

We brought up at the curb with a jerk, threw back the doors, and dashed up the steps. I caught a vanishing glimpse of Handsome

Harry leaning far forward to lash the horse as the hansom went bounding off into the fog. As we stood pressed against the door, Tom whispered:

"What the devil is their name?"

"Kennedy," I hissed at him—"Cassius P. Kennedy. Came originally from Necropolis City, Ohio; lived in Chicago as a clerk in the Colonial Box, Tub, and Cordage Company, and then was made manager of the London branch. Their weak point is society. If any people are there, keep your mouth shut. Be dense and unresponsive."

We heard the rattle of the pursuing hansom at the end of the street, then through the ground glass of the door saw a man servant's approaching figure.

"Only stay a few minutes over the coffee. We're going on to the opera," I whispered, as the door opened.

I swept in, Tom on my heels. We came as fast as we could without actually falling in and dashing the servant aside, for the noise of our pursuer was loud in our ears, and we knew we were lost if we were seen entering. As Tom somewhat hastily shut the door, I was conscious of the expression of surprise on the face of the solemn butler. He did not say anything, but looked it. I slid out of my cloak, and handed it, languidly, to him.

"No, I won't go up-stairs," I said, in answer to his glare of growing amaze.

Then I turned to the glass in the

hat-rack, and began to arrange my hair. I could see, reflected in it, a pair of portieres, half open, and affording a glimpse of a room beyond, bathed in the subdued rosy light of lamps. I was conscious of movement there behind the portières—a stir of skirts, a sort of hush of curiosity.

There had been the sound of voices when we came in. Now I noticed the stealthy, occasional sibilant of a whisper. There was no dinner-party. We were going to dine *en famille*. So much the better. My hair neat, I turned to the butler, and, touching the jet of my corsage with an arranging hand, murmured:

"Major and Mrs. Thatcher."

The man drew back the curtain, and, with our name going before us

in loud announcement, I rustled into the room, Tom behind me.

Standing beside an empty fireplace, and facing the entrance in attitudes of expectancy, were a young man and woman. In the soft pink lamplight I had an impression of their two astonished faces, or, rather, astonished eyes, for they were making a spirited struggle to obliterate all surprise from their faces. The woman was succeeding the best. She did it quite well. When she saw me she smiled almost naturally, and came forward with a fair imitation of a hostess' welcoming manner. She was young and very pretty—a fine-featured, delicate woman, in a floating lace tea-gown. Her hand was thin and small, a real American hand, and gleamed with rings. I

could see her husband, out of the tail of my eye, battling with his amazement and staring at Tom. Tom was behind me, looming up bulkily, not saying anything, but looking blankly through the glass wedged in his eye and pulling his mustache.

"My dear Mrs. Kennedy," I said, in my sweetest and most languid drawl, "are we late? I hope not. There is such a fog, really I thought we'd never get here."

My fingers touched her hand, and my eyes looked into hers. She was immensely curious and upset, but she smiled boldly and almost easily. I could see her inward wrestlings to place me, and to wonder if she could possibly have asked us, and had forgotten that too.

"And at last," I continued, glibly,

"I am able to present my husband. I was afraid you were beginning to think he was a sort of Mrs. Harris. Harry, dear, Mrs. and Mr. Kennedy."

They all bowed. Tom held out his big paw, and took her little hand for a moment, and then dropped it. He had just the stolid, awkward, owlish look of a certain kind of army man.

"Awfully glad to get here, I'm sure," he boomed out. And then he said "What?" and looked at Mr. Kennedy.

Mr. Kennedy was not as much master of the situation as his wife. He wasn't exactly frightened, but he was inwardly distracted with not knowing what to do.

"Pleased to meet you," he said,

loudly, to Tom, quite forgetting his English accent. "Glad you could get around here. Foggy night, all right!"

I looked at the clock. Tom stood solemnly on the hearth-rug, staring at the fire. The Kennedys, for a moment, could think of nothing to say, and I had to look at the clock again, screw up my eyes, and remark:

"Just half past. We're not really late at all. You know, Harry is *such* a punctual person, and he's afraid I've got into unpunctual habits while he's been away."

"He *has* been away for some time, hasn't he?" said Mrs. Kennedy, looking from one to the other with piquant eyes that yearned for information.

"Four years with the Lancers in India," Tom boomed out again.

The Kennedys were relieved. They'd got hold of something. They both sat down, and it was obvious that they gathered themselves together for new efforts.

I did likewise. I realized that I must be biographical to a reasonable extent—just enough to satisfy curiosity, without giving the impression that I was sitting down to tell my life-story the way the heroine does in the first act of a play.

"He arrived only last Saturday," I said, "and you may imagine how pleased I was to be able to bring him to-night, in answer to your kind invitation."

"Only too glad he could come," murmured Mrs. Kennedy, oblivious

of the terrified side-glance that her husband cast in her direction. "Very fortunate that you had this one evening disengaged."

"I'm taking him about everywhere," I continued, with girlish loquacity. "People had begun to think that Major Thatcher was a myth, and I'm showing them that there's a good deal of him and he's very much alive. For four years, you know, I've been living here, first in those miserable lodgings in Half Moon Street, and after that in my flat—you know it—on Gower Street. A nice little place enough, but much nicer now, with Harry in it."

"Of course," said Mrs. Kennedy, as sympathetically as was compatible with her eagerness to pounce upon such crumbs of information as I let

drop. "How dull these four years have been for you!"

"Dull!" I echoed, "dull is not the word!" And I gave my eyes an expressive, acrobatic roll toward the ceiling.

"She couldn't have stood it out there," said Tom, in an unexpected bass growl. "Too hot! Ethel can't stand the heat—never could."

Then he lapsed into silence, staring at the fire under Mr. Kennedy's fascinated gaze. Dinner was just then announced, and I heard him saying as he walked in behind us:

"Is India very hot, Mrs. Kennedy? Once in Delhi I sat for four days in a cold bath, and read the Waverley novels."

To which Mrs. Kennedy answered, brightly:

"I should think that would have put you to sleep, and you might have been drowned."

That was one of the most remarkable dinners I ever sat through. Of the two couples, the Kennedys were the least at ease. They were more afraid of being found out than we were. The cold sweat would break out on Mr. Kennedy's brow when the conversation edged up toward the subject of previous meetings, and Mrs. Kennedy would begin to talk feverishly about other things. She was the kind of woman who hates to be unequal to any social emergency; and I am bound to confess, considering how unprepared she was, she held her own this time with tact and spirit. She had the copious flow of small talk so many Ameri-

cans seem to have at command, and it rippled fluently and untiringly on from the soup to the savory. I added to the impression I had already made by alluding to various titled friends of mine, letting their names drop carelessly from my lips as the pearls and diamonds fell from the mouth of the virtuous princess.

Tom did well, too — excellently well. When the conversation showed signs of languishing, he began about India. He gave us some strange pieces of information about that distant land that I think he invented on the spur of the moment, and he told several anecdotes which were quite deadly and without point. When they were concluded, he gave a short, deep laugh, let his eye-glass fall out,

looked at us one after the other, and said, "What?"

I would have enjoyed myself immensely if a sense of heavy uneasiness had not continued to weigh on me. What troubled me was the uncertainty of not knowing whether we really had escaped our pursuers. There was the horrible possibility that they had seen us enter the house, and were waiting to grab us as we came out. If they were there, and I was caught with the diamonds in my possession, it would be a pretty dark outlook for Laura the lady—so dark I could not bear to picture it, even in thought. As I talked and laughed with my hosts, my mind was turning over every possible means by which I could get rid of the stones before I left the house, trying

to think up some way in which I could dispose of them, and yet which would not place them quite beyond reclaiming. I think my nerves had been shaken by that spectral pursuit in the fog. Anyway, I wasn't willing to risk a second edition of it.

We sat over dinner a little more than an hour. It was not yet ten when Mrs. Kennedy and I rose, and with a reminder to Tom that we were to "go to the opera," I trailed off in advance of my hostess across the hall into the drawing-room. Here we sat down by a little gilt table, and disposed ourselves to endure that dreary period when women have to put up with one another's society for ten minutes. It was my opportunity of getting rid of the diamonds, and I knew it.

We had sipped our coffee for a few minutes, and dodged about with the usual commonplaces, when I suddenly grew grave, and, leaning toward Mrs. Kennedy, said:

"Now that we are alone, my dear Mrs. Kennedy, I must ask you about a matter of which I am particularly anxious to hear more."

She looked at me with furtive alarm. I could see she was nerving herself for a grapple with the unknown.

"What matter?" she said.

I lowered my voice to the key of confidences that are dire if not actually tragic:

"How about poor Amelia?" I murmured.

She dropped her eyes to her cup, frowning a little. I was thrilling

with excitement, waiting to hear what she was going to say. After a moment she lifted her face, perfectly calm and grave, to mine, and said:

"Really, the subject is a very painful one to me. I'd rather not talk about it."

It was a master-stroke. I could not have done better myself. I eyed her with open admiration. You never would have thought it of her; she seemed so young. After she had spoken she gave a sigh, and again looked down at her cup, with an expression on her face of pensive musing. At that moment the voices of the men leaving the dining-room struck on my ear.

I put my hand into the front of my dress, and undid the safety-pin.

My manner became furtive and hurried.

"Mrs. Kennedy," I said, leaning across the table, and speaking almost in a whisper, "I entirely sympathize with your feelings, but I am *very much* worried about Amelia. You know the—the—circumstances." She raised her eyes, looked into mine, and nodded darkly. "Well, I have something here for her. It's nothing much," I said, in answer to a look of protest I saw rising in her face—"just the merest trifle I would like you to give her. *She* will understand."

I drew out the bag, and I saw her looking at it with curious, uneasy eyes. The men were approaching through the back drawing-room. I

rose to my feet, and still with the secret, hurried air, I said:

"Don't give yourself any trouble about it. It's just from me to her. Our husbands, of course, mustn't know. I'll put it here. Poor Amelia!"

There was a crystal and silver bowl on the table, and I put the bag into it and placed a book over it.

"Mrs. Thatcher," she said, quickly, "really, I—"

"Hush!" I said, dramatically, "it's for Amelia! *We* understand!"

And then the men entered the room.

We left a few minutes later. The butler called a cab for us, and even if a person had never been a thief he ought to have had some idea of how we felt as we issued out of that

house and walked down the steps. We neither of us spoke till we got inside the hansom and drove off—safe for that time, anyway.

We went to Handsome Harry's place for that night, and sent him back for Maud, with the message she must get out immediately with what things she could bring. By eleven she was with us with her trunk and mine on top of a four-wheeler. The next morning we had scattered—I for Calais *en route* for Paris, Tom for Edinburgh. Maud went to join a vaudeville company that she acts with "between-whiles." We had to leave a good many things in the flat; but I felt we'd got out cheaply, and had no regrets.

That is the history of my connec-

tion with the Castlecourt diamond robbery. Of course, it was not the end of the connection of our gang with the case, but my actual participation ended here. I was simply an interested spectator from this on. My statement is merely the record of my own personal share in the theft, and as such is written with as much clearness and fulness as I, who am unused to the pen, have got at my command.

Statement of Cassius P. Kennedy, formerly of Necropolis City, Ohio, now Manager of the London Branch of the Colonial Box, Tub, and Cordage Company (Ltd.) of Chicago and St. Louis. : : : : : : : : : : :

Statement of Cassius P. Kennedy, formerly of Necropolis City, Ohio, now Manager of the London Branch of the Colonial Box, Tub, and Cordage Company (Ltd.) of Chicago and St. Louis. : : : : : : : : : : :

WE HAD been in London two years when a series of extraordinary events took place which involved us, through no fault of our own, in the most unpleasant predicament that ever overtook two honest, respectable Americans in a foreign country.

I had been sent over to start the English branch of the Colonial Box, Tub, and Cordage Company, one of the biggest concerns of the Middle West, and it wasn't two months before I realized that the venture was going to catch on, and I was going

to be at the head of a booming business. I'd brought my wife and little girl along with me. We'd been married five years—met in Necropolis City, and lived there and afterward in Chicago, where I got my first big promotion. She was Daisy K. Fairweather, of Buncumville, Indiana, and had been the belle of the place. She'd also attracted considerable attention in St. Louis and Kansas City, where she'd visited round a good deal. There was nothing green about Daisy K. Fairweather—never had been.

Daisy and I didn't know many people when we first came over, but that little woman wasn't here six months before she'd sized up the situation, and made up her mind just how and where she was going

to butt in. The first thing she did was to conform to those particular ones among the local customs that seemed to her the most high-toned. In Chicago we'd always dined at half-past six, and given the hired girls every Thursday off. In London we dined the first year at half-past seven, and the second at half-past eight. We had four servants and a butler called Perkins, who ran everything in sight—myself included. I always dressed for dinner after Perkins came, and tried to look as if it was my lifelong custom. I'd have sunk out of sight in a sea of shame rather than have had Perkins think I had not been brought up to it.

Daisy caught on to everything, and then passed the word on to me. She

was always springing innovations on me, and I did the best I could to keep my end up. She stopped talking the way she used to in Necropolis City, and made Elaine—that's our little girl—quit calling me "Popper" and call me "Daddy." She called her front hair her "fringe" and her shirt-waist her "bloos," and she made me careful of what I said before the servants. "Servants talk so!" she'd say, just as if she'd heard them. In Necropolis City, or even Chicago, we never bothered about the "help" talking. They said what they wanted and we said what we wanted, and that was all there was to it. But I supposed it was all right. Whatever Daisy K. Fairweather Kennedy says goes with me.

By the second season Daisy'd

broken quite a way into society, and knew a bishop and two lords. We were asked out a good deal, and we'd some worthy little dinners at our own shack—15 Farley Street, near Walworth Crescent, a thirty-five foot, four-story, high-stooped edifice that we paid the same rent for you'd pay for a seven-room flat in Chicago. Daisy by this time was in with all kinds of push. She was what she called a "success." Nights when we didn't go out she'd sit with me and say:

"Well, I don't really see how I'll ever be able to live in Chicago again, and Necropolis City would certainly kill me."

This same season Lady Sara Gyves dined with us twice (it was a great step, Daisy said, and I took it for

granted she knew), and once at a reception Daisy stood right up close to the Marchioness of Castlecourt, the greatest beauty in London, and watched her drink a cup of tea. Daisy didn't meet her that time, but she said to me:

"Next season I'll know her, and the season after that, if we're careful, I'll dine with her. Then, Cassius P. Kennedy, we will have arrived!"

I said "Sure!" That's what I mostly say to her, because she's mostly right. You don't often find that little woman making breaks.

It was in our third season in London, the time the middle of May, when the things occurred of which I have made mention at the begin-

ning of my statement. It was this way:

We'd been going out a good deal, pretty nearly every night, and we were glad to have, for once, a quiet evening at home. Of course, that doesn't mean the same as it does in Necropolis City or even Chicago. We dine, just the same, at half-past eight, and both of us dress for dinner. We have to, Daisy says, no matter how we feel, because of the servants. The servants in London are good servants all right, but the way you have to avoid shocking their sensitive feelings sometimes makes a free-born American rebellious. I like to think I'm an object of interest to my fellow creatures, but it's a good deal of a bother to have it on your mind that you mustn't destroy

the illusions of the butler or upset the ideals of the cook.

As we were waiting for dinner to be announced we heard a cab rattle up and stop, as it seemed, at our door. We looked at each other with inquiring eyes, and then heard the cab go off—on the full jump, I should say, by the noise it made—and a minute later the bell rang sharp and quick. Perkins opened the door, and Daisy and I heard a lady's voice, very sweet and sort of drawling, say something in the vestibule. I peeped through the curtains, and there were a man and a woman—a distinguished-looking pair—taking off their coats and primping themselves up at the hall mirror. I'd never seen either of them before, as far as I could re-

member, but I could tell by their general make-up that they were the real thing—the kind Daisy was always cultivating and asking to dinner.

I stepped back, and said to her, in a whisper:

"Somebody's come to dinner, and you've forgotten all about it."

She shook her head, and whispered back:

"I haven't asked any one to dinner; I'm sure I haven't."

"Well, they're here, whether we've asked them or not," I hissed, "and you can't turn 'em out. They expect to be fed."

"Who are they?"

"Search me! Friends of your's I've never seen."

"For pity's sake, don't look sur-

prised! Try and pretend it's all right."

We lined up by the fireplace, and got our smiles all ready. The portière was drawn, and Perkins announced:

"Major and Mrs. Thatcher."

They sailed smilingly into the room, the woman ahead, rustling in a long, sparkly, black dress. To my certain knowledge, I'd never seen either of them before. The woman was very pretty; not pretty in the sense that Daisy is, with beautiful features and a perfect complexion, but slim, and pale, and aristocratic-looking. She had black hair with a little wreath of red flowers in it, and the whitest neck I ever saw. She evidently thought she was all right as far as herself and the house and

the dinner were concerned, for she was perfectly serene, and easy as an old shoe. The man behind her was a big, handsome, dense chap—just home from India, they said, and he looked it. He'd that dull way those dead swell army fellows sometimes have; it goes with a long mustache and an eye-glass.

I looked out of the tail of my eye at Daisy, and I knew by her face she couldn't remember either of them. But they were the genuine article, and she wasn't going to be feazed by any situation that could boil up out of the society pool. She was just as easy as they were. She'd a smile on her face like a child, and she said the little, mild, milky things women say just as milkily and mild-

ly as tho she was greeting her life-long friends.

Well, it went along as smoothly as a summer sea. They located themselves as Major and Mrs. Thatcher, and told a lot about their life and their movements—all of which I could see Daisy greedily gathering in. I didn't know whether she remembered them or not, but I didn't think she did, she was so careful about alluding to places where she had met them. They seemed to know her all right—Mrs. Thatcher, especially. She'd allude to smart houses where Daisy had been asked, and tony people that were getting to be friends of Daisy's. She seemed to be right in the best circles herself. I wouldn't like to say how many times she mentioned the names of

earls and lords; one of them, Baron —some name like Fiddlesticks—she said was her cousin.

She didn't stay long after dinner. I don't think I sat ten minutes with the major—and it was a dull ten minutes, and no mistake. There was nothing light and airy about him. He asked me about Chicago (which he pronounced "Chick-ago"), and said he had heard there was good sport in the Rocky Mountains, and thought of going there to hunt the Great Auk. I didn't know what the Great Auk was, and I asked him. He looked blankly at me, and said he believed a "large form of bird," which surprised me, as I had an idea it was a preadamite beast, like a behemoth.

I was glad to have the major go, not only because he was so dull, but

because I was so dying to find out from Daisy if she'd placed them and who they were. They were hardly on the steps and the front door shut on them before I was back in the parlor.

"Who are they, for heavens' sake?" I burst out.

She shook her head, laughing a little, and looking utterly bewildered.

"My dear boy," she said, "I haven't the least idea. It's the most extraordinary thing I ever knew."

"Isn't there anything about them you remember? Didn't they say something that gave you a clew?"

"Not a word, and yet they seem to know me so well. The queerest thing of all was that, when you were in the dining-room with the man, the woman, in the most confidential tone,

began to ask me about some one called Amelia. It was *too* dreadful! I hadn't the faintest notion what she meant."

"What did you say? I'll lay ten to one you were equal to it."

"I realized it was desperate, and, after going through the dinner so creditably, I wasn't going to break down over the coffee. She said: 'How about poor Amelia?' I knew by that 'poor' and by the expression of her face it was something unusual and queer. I thought a minute, and then looked as solemn as I could, and answered: 'Really, the subject is a very painful one to me. I'd rather not talk about it.' "

We both roared. It was so like Daisy to be ready that way!

"And then—this is the strangest

part of all—she put her hand in the front of her dress and drew out some little thing of chamois leather, and told me to give it to Amelia from her. I tried to stop her, but it was too late. She put it here in the crystal bowl."

Daisy went to the bowl, and took out a little limp sack of chamois leather.

"It feels like pebbles," she said, pinching it.

And then she opened it and shook the "pebbles" into her hand. I bent down to look at them, my head close to hers. The palm of her hand was covered with small, sparkling crystals of different sizes and very bright. We looked at them, and then at one another. They were diamonds!

For a moment we didn't either of us say anything. Daisy had been laughing, and her laugh died away into a sort of scared giggle. Her hand began to shake a little, and it made the diamonds send out gleams in all directions.

"What — what — does it mean?" she said, in a low sort of gasp.

I just looked at them and shook my head. But I felt a cold sinking in that part of my organism where my courage is usually screwed to the sticking-place.

"Are they real, do you think?" she said again, and she took the evening paper and poured them out on it.

Spread out that way, they looked most awfully numerous and rich. There must have been more than a

hundred of them of different sizes, and shaking around on the surface of the paper made them shine and sparkle like stars.

"It's a fortune, Cassius," she said, almost in a whisper; "it's a fortune in diamonds. Why did she leave them?"

"Didn't she say they were for Amelia?" I said, in a hollow tone.

"Yes; but who is Amelia? How will we ever find her? What shall we do? It's too awful!"

We stood opposite one another with the paper between us, and tried to think. In the lamplight the diamonds winked at us with what seemed human malice. I turned round and picked up the bag they had come from, looked vaguely into it, and shook it. A last stone fell out

on the paper, quite a large one, and added itself to the pile.

"Why did she leave them here?" Daisy moaned. "What did she bother us for? Why didn't she take them to Amelia herself?"

"Because she was afraid," I said, in the undertone of melodrama. "They're stolen, Daisy."

I had voiced the fear in both our hearts. We sat down opposite one another on either side of the table, with the newspaper full of diamonds between us. I don't know whether I was as pale as Daisy, but I felt quite as bad as she looked. And sitting thus, each staring into the other's scared face, we ran over the events of the evening.

We couldn't make much of it; it was too uncanny. But from the first

we both decided we'd felt something to be wrong. Why or how they'd come? who they were? what they wanted?—we couldn't answer a single question. We were in a maze. The only thing that seemed certain was that they had one hundred and fifty diamonds of varying sizes that they had wanted, for some reason, to get rid of, and they'd got rid of them to us. And so we talked and talked till, by slow degrees, we got to the point where suddenly, with a simultaneous start, we looked at one another, and breathed out:

"The Castlecourt diamonds!"

We had read it all in the papers, and we had talked it over, and here we were with a pile of gems in a newspaper that might be the very stones.

"And next year I'd hoped to know Lady Castlecourt. I'd been sure I would!" Daisy wailed. "And now—"

"But you haven't stolen the diamonds, dearest," I said, soothingly. "You needn't get in a fever about that."

"But, good heavens, I might just as well! Do you suppose there's any one in the world fool enough to believe the story of what happened here to-night? People say it's hard to believe everything in the Bible! Why, Jonah and the whale is a simple every-day affair compared to it!"

It did look bad; the more we talked of it the worse it looked. We didn't sleep all night, and when the dawn was coming through the blinds

we were still talking, trying to decide what to do. At breakfast we sat like two graven images, not eating a thing, and all that day in the office I found it impossible to concentrate my mind, but sat thinking of what on earth we'd do with those darned diamonds.

I'd suggested, the first thing, to go and give them up at the nearest police station. But Daisy wouldn't hear of that. She said that no one would believe a word of our story—it was too impossible. And when I came to think of it I must say I agreed with her. I saw myself telling that story in a court of justice, and I realized that a look of conscious guilt would be painted on my face the whole time. I'd have felt, whether it was true or not, that no-

body really ought to believe it, and as an honest, self-respecting citizen I ought not to expect them to. Here we were, strangers that nobody knew a thing about, anyway! Daisy said they'd take us for accomplices; and when I said to her we'd be a pretty rank pair of accomplices to give up the swag without a struggle, she said they'd think we got scared, and decided to do what she calls "turn State's evidence."

She thought the best thing to do was to keep the stones till we could think up a more plausible story. We tried to do that, and the night after our meeting with Major and Mrs. Thatcher we stayed awake till three, thinking up "plausible stories." We got a great collection of them, but it seemed impossible to

get a good one without implicating somebody. I invented a corker, but it cast a dark suspicion on Daisy; and she had an even better one, but it would have undoubtedly resulted in the arrest of Perkins and the housemaid, and possibly myself.

It was a horrible situation. Even if we could possibly have escaped suspicion ourselves, it would have ruined us socially and financially. Would the Colonial Box, Tub, and Cordage Company have retained as the head of its London branch a man who had got himself mixed up with a sensational diamond robbery? Not on your life! That concern demands a high standard and unspotted record in all its employees. I'd have got the sack at the end of the month.

And Daisy! How would the bish-

op and two lords have felt about it? Had no more use for that little woman, you can bet your bottom dollar! Even Lady Sara Gyves, who, they say, will go anywhere to get a dinner, would have given her the Ice-house Laugh. *I* know them. And I saw my Daisy sitting at home all alone on her reception day, and taking dinner with me every night. No, sir! That wouldn't happen if Cassius P. Kennedy had to take those diamonds to the Thames and throw them off London Bridge in a weighted bag.

So there we were! It was a dreadful predicament. Every morning we read the papers with our hearts thumping like hammers. Every ring at the bell made us jump, and we had a deadly fear that each time

the portière was lifted and a caller appeared we'd see the buttons and helmet of a policeman with a warrant of arrest concealed upon his person. I began to have awful dreams and Daisy didn't sleep at all, and got pale and peaked. We thought up more "plausible stories," but they seemed to get less probable every time, and all our spare moments together, which used to be so happy and care free, were now dark and harassed as the meetings of conspirators.

Even concealing the miserable things was a wearing anxiety. First we decided to divide them, Daisy to wear her half in the chamois bag hung around her neck, while I concealed mine in a money-belt worn under my clothes. We had about de-

cided on that and I'd bought the belt, when we got the idea that if we were killed in an accident they'd be found on us, and then our memoirs would go down to posterity blackened with shame. So we just put them back in the bag and locked them up in Daisy's jewel-case, round which we hovered as they say a murderer does round the hiding-place of his victim.

I never knew before how burglars felt; but if it was anything like the way Daisy and I did, I wonder anybody ever takes to that perilous trade. We were the most unhappy creatures in London, feeling ourselves a pair of thieves, and our unpolluted, innoceent home no better than a "fence." There was less in the papers about the Castlecourt

diamonds robbery, but that did not give us any peace; for, in the first place, we didn't know for certain that we had the Castlecourt diamonds, and, in the second, when we now and then did see dark allusions to the sleuths being "on a new and more promising scent," we modestly supposed that we might be the quarry to which it led. Daisy began to talk of "going to prison" as a termination of her career that might not be so far distant, and to the thought of which she was growing reconciled.

This about covers the ground of my immediate connection with the stolen diamonds. Their subsequent disposition is a matter in which my wife is more concerned than I am. She also will be able to tell her part

of the story with more literary frills than I can muster up. I'm no writing man, and all I've tried to do is to state my part of the affair honestly and clearly.

Statement of John Burns Gilsey, private detective, especially engaged on the Castlecourt diamond case. : :

Statement of John Burns Gilsey, private detective, especially engaged on the Castlecourt diamond case. : :

At a quarter before eight on the evening of May fourth a telephone message was sent to Scotland Yard that a diamond necklace, the property of the Marquis of Castlecourt, had been stolen from Burridge's Hotel. Brison, one of the best of their men, was detailed upon the case, and three days later my services were engaged by the marquis. After investigations which have occupied several weeks, I have become convinced that the case is an unusual and complicated one. The reasons which have led me to this conclusion I will now set down as briefly and clearly as possible.

As has already been stated in the papers, the diamonds, on the afternoon of the robbery, were standing in a leather jewel-case on the bureau in Lady Castlecourt's apartment. To this room access was obtained by three doors—that which led into Lord Castlecourt's room, that which led into the sitting-room, and that which led into the hall.

Lord Castlecourt's valet, James Chawlmers, and Lady Castlecourt's maid, Sophy Jeffers, had been occupied in this suite of apartments throughout the afternoon. At six Jeffers had laid out her ladyship's clothes, taken the diamonds from the metal despatch-box in which they were usually carried, and set them on the bureau. She had then withdrawn into the sitting-room with

Chawlmers, where they had remained for half an hour talking. During this period of time Jeffers deposes that she heard the rustle of a skirt in the sitting-room, and went to the door to see if any one had entered. No one was to be seen. She returned to the sitting-room, and resumed her conversation with Chawlmers. It is the general supposition —and it would appear to be the reasonable one—that the diamonds were then taken. According to Jeffers, they were in the case at six o'clock, and on the testimony of Lord and Lady Castlecourt they were gone at half-past seven. The person toward whom suspicion points is a housemaid, going by the name of Sara Dwight, who had a pass-key to the apartment.

The suspicions of Sara Dwight were strengthened by her actions. At quarter past seven that evening she left the hotel without giving warning, and carrying no further baggage than a small portmanteau. Upon examination of her room, it was discovered that she had left a gown hanging on the pegs, and her box, which contained a few articles of coarse underclothing and a wadded cotton quilt. She had been uncommunicative with the other servants, but had had much conversation with Sophy Jeffers, who described her as a brisk, civil-spoken girl, whose manner of speech was above her station.

The natural suspicions evoked by her behavior were intensified in the mind of Brison by the information that the celebrated crook Laura the

Lady had returned to London. I myself had seen the woman at Earlscourt, and told Brison of the occurrence. It had appeared to Brison that Jeffers' description of the housemaid had many points of resemblance with Laura the Lady. The theft reminded us both of the affair of the Comtesse de Chateaugay's rubies, when this particular thief, who speaks French as well as she does English, was supposed to have been the moving spirit in one of the most daring jewel robberies of our time.

Brison, confident that Sara Dwight and Laura the Lady were one and the same, concentrated his powers in an effort to find her. He was successful to the extent of locating a woman closely resembling Laura the Lady living quietly in a furnished

flat in Knightsbridge with a man who passed as her husband. He discovered that this couple had left for a "business trip" on the Continent shortly before Sara Dwight's appearance at Burridge's, and had returned shortly after her departure therefrom.

He regarded the pair and their movements as of sufficient importance to be watched, and for a week after their return from the Continent had the flat shadowed. One foggy night, while he himself was watching the place, the man and woman came out in evening dress, and took a hansom that was waiting for them. Brison followed them, and the fog being dense and their horse fresh, lost them in the maze of streets about Walworth Crescent.

He is positive that the occupants of the cab realized they were followed and attempted to escape. He assures me that he saw the driver turn several times and look at his hansom, and then lash his horse to a desperate speed.

One of the points in this nocturnal pursuit that he thinks most noteworthy is the manner in which the occupants of the cab disappeared. After keeping it well in sight for over half an hour, he lost it completely and suddenly in the short street that runs from Walworth Crescent, north, into Farley Street; ten minutes later he is under the impression that he sighted it again near the Hyde Park Hotel. But if it was the same cab it was empty, and the driver was looking for fares.

For some hours after this Brison patrolled the streets in the neighborhood, but could find no trace of the suspected pair. It was midnight when he returned to his surveillance of the flat. The next morning he heard that its occupants had left. A search-warrant revealed the fact that they had gone with such haste that they had left many articles of dress, etc., behind them. There was every evidence of a hurried flight.

All this was so much clear proof, in Brison's opinion, of the guilt of Sara Dwight. Upon this hypothesis he is working, and I have not disturbed his confidence in the integrity of his efforts. The result of my investigations, which I have been quietly and systematically pursuing

for the last three weeks, has led me to a different and much more sensational conclusion. That Sara Dwight may have taken the diamonds I do not deny. But she was merely an accomplice in the hands of another. The real thief, in my opinion, is Gladys, Marchioness of Castlecourt!

My reasons for holding this theory are based upon observations taken at the time, upon my large and varied experince in such cases, and upon information that I have been collecting since the occurrence. Let me briefly state the result of my deductions and researches.

Lady Castlecourt, who was the daughter of a penniless Irish clergyman, was a young girl of great beauty brought up in the direst poverty. Her marriage with the Mar-

quis of Castlecourt, which took place seven years ago this spring, lifted her into a position of social prominence and financial ease. Society made much of her; she became one of its most brilliant ornaments. Her husband's infatuation was well known. During the first years of their marriage he could refuse her nothing, and he stinted himself—for, tho well off, Lord Castlecourt is by no means a millionaire peer—in order to satisfy her whims. The lady very quickly developed great extravagances. She became known as one of the most expensively dressed women in London. It had been mentioned in certain society journals that Lord Castlecourt's revenues had been so reduced by his wife's extravagance that he had been

forced to rent his town house in Grosvenor Gate, and for two seasons take rooms in Burridge's Hotel.

This is a simple statement of certain tendencies of the lady. Now let me state, with more detail, how these tendencies developed and to what they led.

I will admit here, before I go further, that my suspicions of Lady Castlecourt were aroused from the first. It was, perhaps, with a predisposed mind that I began those explorations into her life during the past five years which have convinced me that she was the moving spirit in this theft of the diamonds.

For the first two years of her married life Lady Castlecourt lived most of the time on the estate of Castlecourt Marsh Manor. During

this period she became the mother of two sons, and it was after the birth of the second that she went to London and spent her first season there since her marriage. She was in blooming health, and even more beautiful that she had been in her girlhood. She became the fashion: no gathering was complete without her; her costumes were described in the papers; royalty admired her.

I have discovered that at this time her husband gave her six hundred pounds per annum for a dressing allowance. During the first two years of her married life she lived within this. But after that she exceeded it to the extent of hundreds, and finally thousands, of pounds. The fifth year after her marriage she was in debt three thousand pounds,

her creditors being dressmakers, furriers, jewelers, and milliners in London and Paris. She made no attempt to pay these debts, and the tradesmen, knowing her high social position and her husband's rigid sense of pecuniary obligations, did not press her, and she went on spending with an unstinted hand.

It was last year that she finally precipitated the catastrophe by the purchase of a coat of Russian sable for the sum of one thousand pounds, and a set of turquoise ornaments valued at half that amount. Each of these purchases was made in Paris. The two creditors, having been already warned of her disinclination to meet her bills, had, it is said, laid wagers with other firms to which she was deeply in debt, that

they would extract the money from her within the year.

It was in the summer of the past year that Lady Castlecourt was first threatened by Bolkonsky, the furrier, with law proceedings. In the end of September she went to Paris and visited the man in his own offices, and—I have it from an eye-witness—exhibited the greatest trepidation and alarm, finally begging, with tears, for an extension of a month's time. To this Bolkonsky consented, warning her that, at the end of that time, if his account was not settled, he would acquaint his lordship with the situation and institute legal proceedings.

Before the month was up—that was in October of the past year—his account was paid in full by Lady

Castlecourt herself. At the same time other accounts in Paris and London were entirely settled or compromised. I find that, during the months of October and November, Lady Castlecourt paid off debts amounting to nearly four thousand pounds. In most instances she settled them personally, paying them in bank-notes. A few claims were paid by check. I have it from those with whom she transacted these monetary dealings that she seemed greatly relieved to be able to discharge her obligations, and that in all cases she requested silence on the subject as the price of her future patronage.

I now come to a feature of the case that I admit greatly puzzles me. Lady Castlecourt was still wearing the diamonds when this large sum

was disbursed by her. As far as can be ascertained, she had made no effort to sell them, and I can find no trace of a frustrated attempt to steal them. She had suddenly become possessed of four thousand pounds without the aid of the diamonds. They were not called into requisition till nearly six months later.

The natural supposition would be that "some one"—an unknown donor — had put up the four thousand pounds; in fact, that Lady Castlecourt had a lover, to whom, in a desperate extremity, she had appealed. But the most thorough examination of her past life reveals no hint of such a thing. Frivolous and extravagant as she undoubtedly was, she seems to have been, as far

as her personal conduct goes, a moral and virtuous lady. Her name has been associated with no man's, either in a foolish flirtation or a scandalous and compromising intrigue; in fact, her devotion to Lord Castlecourt appears to have been of an absolutely genuine and sincere kind. While she did not scruple to deceive him as to her pecuniary dealings, she unquestionably seems to have been perfectly upright and honest in the matter of marital fidelity.

Where, then, did Lady Castlecourt secure this large sum of money? My reading of the situation is briefly this:

Her creditors becoming rebellious and Lady Castlecourt becoming terrified, she appealed to some woman friend for a loan. Who this is I

have no idea, but among her large circle of acquaintances there are several ladies of sufficient means and sufficiently intimate with Lady Castlecourt to have been able to advance the required sum. This was done, as I have shown above, in the month of October, when Lady Castlecourt was in Paris, where she at once began to pay off her debts. After this she continued wearing the diamonds, and, in my opinion—such is her shallowness and irresponsibility of character—forgot the obligations of the loan, which had probably been made under a promise of speedy repayment, either in full or in part.

It was then—this, let it be understood, is all surmise—that Lady Castlecourt's new and unknown debtor began to press for a repayment.

There might be many reasons why this should so closely have followed the loan. With a woman of Lady Castlecourt's lax and unbusinesslike methods, unusual conditions could be readily exacted. She is of the class of persons that, under a pressing need for money, would agree to any conditions and immediately forget them. That she did agree to a speedy reimbursement I am positive; that once again she found herself confronted by an angry and threatening creditor; and that, in desperation and with the assistance of Sara Dwight, she stole the diamonds, intending probably to pawn them, is the conclusion to which my experience and investigations have led me.

How she came to select Sara

Dwight as an accomplice I am not qualified to state. In my opinion, fear of detection made her seek the aid of a confederate. Sara's flight, with its obviously suspicious surroundings, has an air of prearrangement suggestive of having been carefully planned to divert suspicion from the real criminal. Sophy Jeffers assured me that Lady Castlecourt had never, to her knowledge, conversed at any length with the housemaid. But Jeffers is a very simple-minded person, whom it would be an easy matter to deceive. That Sara Dwight was her ladyship's accomplice I am positive; that she took the jewels and now has them is also my opinion.

Being convinced of her need of ready money, and of the rashness

and lack of balance in her character, I have been expecting that Lady Castlecourt would make some decisive move in the way of selling the diamonds. With this idea agents of mine have been on the watch, but without so far finding any evidence that she has attempted to place the stones on the market. We have found no traces of them either in London or Paris, or the usual depots in Holland or Belgium. It is true that the Castlecourt diamonds, not being remarkable for size, would be easy to dispose of in small, separate lots, but our system of surveillance is so thorough that I do not see how they could escape us. I am of the opinion that the stones are still in the hands of Sara Dwight, who, whether she is an accomplished thief

or not, is probably more wary and more versed in such dealings than Lady Castlecourt.

That her ladyship should have been the object of my suspicions from the start may seem peculiar to those to whom she appears only as a person of rank, wealth, and beauty. Before the case came under my notice at all, I had heard her uncontrolled extravagance remarked upon, and that alone, coupled with the fact that Lord Castlecourt is not a peer of vast wealth, and that the lady's moral character is said to be unblemished, would naturally arouse the suspicion of one used to the vagaries and intricacies of the evolution of crime.

During my first interview with her ladyship I watched her closely,

and was struck by her pallor, her impatience under questioning, her hardly concealed nervousness, and her indignant repudiation of the suspicions cast upon her servants. All the domestics in her employment agree that she is a kind and generous mistress, and it would be particularly galling to one of her disposition to think that her employees were suffering for her faults. Her answers to many of my questions were vague and evasive, and to both Brison and myself, at two different times, she suggested the possibility of the jewels not being stolen at all, but having been "mislaid." Even Brison, whose judgment had been warped by her beauty and rank, was forced to admit the strangeness of this remark.

The description given me by Sophy Jeffers of her ladyship's deportment when the theft was discovered still further strengthened my suspicions. Lady Castlecourt's behavior at this juncture might have passed as natural by those not used to the very genuine hysteria which often attacks criminals. That she was wrought up to a high degree of nervous excitement is acknowledged by all who saw her. It is alleged by Jeffers—quite innocently of any intention to injure her mistress, to whom she appears devoted—that her ladyship's first emotion on discovering the loss was a fear of her husband; that when he entered the room she instinctively tried to conceal the empty jewel-case behind her, and that almost her first words to

him were assurances that she had not been careless, but had guarded the jewels well.

Fear of Lord Castlecourt was undoubtedly the most prominent feeling she then possessed, and it showed itself with unrestrained frankness in the various ways described above. Afterward she attempted to be more reticent, and adopted an air of what almost appeared indifference, surprising not only myself and Brison, but Jeffers, by her remarks, made with irritated impatience, that they still might "turn up somewhere," and "that she did not see how we could be so sure they were stolen." This change of attitude was even more convincing to me than her former exhibition of alarm. The very candor and childishness with

which she showed her varying states of mind would have disarmed most people, but were to me almost conclusive proofs of her guilt. She is a woman whose shallow irresponsibility of mind is even more unusual than her remarkable beauty. No one but an old and seasoned criminal, or a creature of extraordinary simplicity, could have behaved with so much audacity in such a situation.

Having arrived at these conclusions, I am not reduced to a passive attitude. I will wait and watch until such time as the diamonds are either pawned or sold. This may not occur for months, tho I am inclined to think that her ladyship's need of money will force her to a recklessness which will be her undoing. Sara Dwight may be able to control her to

a certain point, but I am under the impression that her ladyship, frightened and desperate, will be a very difficult person to handle.

This brings my statement up to date. At the present writing I am simply awaiting developments, confident that the outcome will prove the verity of my original proposition and the exactitude of my subsequent line of argument.

The Statement of Daisy K. Fairweather Kennedy, late of Necropolis City, Ohio, at present a resident of 15 Farley Street, Knightsbridge, London.

The Statement of Daisy K. Fairweather Kennedy, late of Necropolis City, Ohio, at present a resident of 15 Farley Street, Knightsbridge, London.

I BELIEVE it is not necessary for me to state how a chamois-skin bag containing one hundred and sixty-two diamonds came into my hands on the evening of May 14th. That it did come into my possession was enough for me. I never before thought that the possession of diamonds could make a woman so perfectly miserable. When I was a young girl in Necropolis City I used to think to own a diamond—even one small one—would be just about the acme of human joy. But Necropolis City is a good way behind me now, and I have found that the

owning of a handful of them can be about the most wearing form of misery.

I suppose there are fearless, upright people in the world who would have taken those diamonds straight back to the police station and braved public opinion. It would have been better to have had your word doubted, to be tried for a thief, put in jail, and probably complicated the diplomatic relations between England and the United States, than to conceal in your domicile one hundred and sixty-two precious stones that didn't belong to you. I hope every one understands—and I'm sure every one does who knows me—that I did not want to keep the miserable things. What good did they do me, anyway,

locked up in my jewel-box, in the upper right-hand bureau drawer?

We knew no peace from that tragic evening when Major and Mrs. Thatcher dined with us. First we tried to think of ways of getting rid of them—of the diamonds, I mean. Cassius, who's just a simple, uncomplicated man, wanted to take them right to the nearest police station and hand them in. I soon showed him the madness of *that*. Was there a soul in London who would have believed our story? Wouldn't the American ambassador himself have had to bow his crested head and tame his heart of fire, and admit it was about the fishiest tale he had ever heard?

It would have ruined us forever. Even if Cassius hadn't been deposed

from his place as the head of the English branch of the Colonial Box, Tub, and Cordage Company (Ltd), of Chicago and St. Louis, who would have known me? The trail of the diamonds would have been over us forever. Lady Sara Gyves would have gone round saying she always thought I had the face of a thief, and the bishop and the two lords I've collected with such care would have cut me dead in the Park. I would have received my social quietus forever. And, I just tell you, when I've worked for a thing as hard as I have for that bishop and the two lords and Lady Sara Gyves, I'm not going to give them up without a struggle.

Cassius and I spent two feverish, agonized weeks trying to think what

we would do with the diamonds. I never knew before I had so much inventive ability. It was wonderful the things we thought of. One of our ideas was to put a personal in the papers advertising for "Amelia." We spent five consecutive evenings concocting different ones that would have the effect of rousing "Amelia's" curiosity and deadening that of everybody else. It did not seem capable of construction. Twist and turn it as you would, you couldn't state that you had something valuable in your possession for "Amelia" without making the paragraph bristle with a sort of mysterious importance. It was like a trap set and baited to catch the attention of a detective. We did insert one—"Will Amelia kindly publish her

present address, and oblige Major and Mrs. Thatcher?"—which, after all, didn't involve us. And for two weeks we read the papers with beating, hopeful hearts, but there was no reply. I thought "Amelia" never saw it. Cassius thought there was no such person.

A month dragged itself away, and there we were with those horrible gems locked in my jewel-box. I began to look pale and miserable, and Cassius told me he thought the diamonds were becoming a "fixed idea" with me, and he'd have to take me away for a change. Once I told him I felt as if I'd never have any peace or be my old gay self again while they were in my possession. He said, that being the case, he'd take them out some night and throw them in

the Serpentine, the pond where the despondent people commit suicide. But I dissuaded him from it.

"Perhaps they'll never be claimed," I said. "And some day when we're old we can have them set and Elaine can wear them."

"You might even wear them yourself," Cassius said, trying to cheer me up.

"What would be the good?" I answered, gloomily. "I'd be at least sixty before I'd dare to."

All through June I lived under this wearing strain, and I grew thinner and more nervous day by day. The season which is always so lovely and gay was no longer an exciting and joyous time for me. I drove down Bond Street with a frowning face, and it did not cheer

me up at all to see how many people I seemed to know. Looking down the vistas of quiet, asphalted streets, where the lines of sedate house fronts are brightened by polished brasses on the doors and flower-boxes at the windows, I was no longer filled with an exhilarating determination to some day be an honored guest in every house that was worth entering. When I drove by the green ovals of the little parks, which you can't enter without a private key, I experienced none of my old ambition to have a key too, and go in and mingle with the aristocracy sitting on wooden benches.

Even meeting the Countess of Belsborough at a reception, and being asked by her, in a sociable, friendly way, if I knew her cousin

John, who was mining somewhere in Mexico or Honduras—she wasn't sure which—did not cheer me up at all. The change in me was extraordinary. When I first came to London, if even a curate or a clerk from the city had asked me such a question, I'd have made an effort to remember John, as if Mexico had been my front garden and I'd played all round Honduras when I was a child. Now I said to Lady Belsborough that neither Mexico nor Honduras were part of the United States quite snappishly, as if I thought she was stupid. And all because of those accursed diamonds!

It was toward the end of June, and the days were getting warm, when the climax came.

The pressure of the season was

abating. The rhododendrons were dead in the Park, and there was dust on the trees. In St. James' the grass was quite worn and patchy, and strangely clad people lay on it, sleeping in the sun. One met a great many American tourists in white shirt-waists and long veils. I thought of the time when I, too, innocently and unthinkingly, had worn a white shirt-waist, and it didn't seem to me such a horrible time, after all—at least, I did not then have one hundred and sixty-two stolen diamonds in my jewel-box. My heart was lighter in those days, even if my shirt-waist had only cost a dollar and forty-nine cents at a department store in Necropolis City.

The month ended with a spell of what the English call "frightful

heat." It was quite warm weather, and we sat a good deal on the little balcony that juts out from my window over the front door. Farley Street is quiet and rather out of the line of general traffic, so we had chairs and a table there, and used to have tea served under the one palm, which was all there was room for. We could not have visitors there, for it opened out of my bedroom. So our tea-parties on the balcony were strictly family affairs —just Cassius, and Elaine, and I.

The last day of the month was really very warm. Every door in the house was open, and the servants went about gasping, with their faces crimson. I dined at home alone that evening, as one of the members of the Box, Tub, and Cordage Company

was in London, at the Carlton, and Cassius was dining with him. I did not expect him home till late, as there would be lots to talk over.

I had not felt well all day. The heat had given me a headache, and after dinner I lay on the sofa in the sitting-room, feeling quite miserable. Only a few of the lamps were lit, and the house was dim and extremely quiet. Being alone that way in the half dark got on my nerves, and I decided I'd go up-stairs and go to bed early. I always did hate sitting about by myself, and now more than ever, with the diamonds on my conscience.

Our stairs are thickly carpeted, and as I had on thin satin slippers and a crêpe tea-gown I made no noise at all coming up. I always

have a light burning in my room, so when I saw a yellow gleam below the door I did not think anything of it, but just softly pushed the door open and went in. Then I stopped dead where I stood. A man with a soft felt-hat on, and a handkerchief tied over the lower part of his face, was standing in front of the bureau!

He had not heard me, and for a moment I stood without making a sound, watching him. The two gas-jets on either side of the bureau were lit, and that part of the room was flooded with light. Very quickly and softly he was turning over the contents of the drawers, taking out laces, gloves, and veils, throwing them this way and that out of his way, and opening every box he

found. My heart gave a great leap when I saw him seize upon the jewel-box, and my mouth, unfortunately, emitted some kind of a sound —I think it was a sort of gasp of relief, but I'm not sure.

Whatever it was, he heard. He gave a start as if he had been electrified, raised his head, and saw me. For just one second he stood staring, and then he said something—of a profane character, I think—and ran for the balcony.

And I ran too. There was something in the way—a little table, I believe—and he collided with it. That checked him for a moment, and I got to the window first. I threw myself across it with my arms spread out, in an attitude like that assumed by Sara Bernhardt when she is bar-

ring her lover's exit in "Fedora." But I don't think any actress ever barred her lover's exit with as much determination and zeal as I barred the exit of that burglar.

"You can't go!" I cried, wildly. "You've forgotten something!"

He paused just in front of me, and I cried again:

"You haven't got them; they're in the jewelry-box."

He moved forward and laid his hand on my arm, to push me aside. I felt quite desperate, and wailed:

"Oh, don't go without opening the jewelry-box. There are some things in it I know you will like."

He tried to push me out of the way—gently, it is true, but with force. But I clung to him, clasped him by the arm with what must have

appeared quite an affectionate grip, and continued, imploringly:

"Don't be in such a hurry. I'm sorry I interrupted you. If you'll promise not to go till you've looked through my things and taken what you want, I'll leave the room. It was quite by accident that I came in."

The burglar let go my arm, and looked at me over the handkerchief with a pair of eyes that seemed quite kind and pleasant.

"Really," he said, in a deep, gentlemanly voice that seemed familiar —"really, I don't quite understand—"

"I know you don't," I interrupted, impulsively. "How could you be expected to? And I can't explain. It's a most complicated matter, and

would take too long. Only don't be frightened and run away till you've taken something. You've endangered your life and risked going to prison to get in here; and wouldn't it be too foolish, after that, to go without anything? Now, in the jewelry-box"—I indicated it, and spoke in what I hoped was a most insinuating tone—"there are some things that I think you'd like. If you'd just look at them—"

"You're a most persuasive lady," said the burglar, "but—"

He moved again toward the window. A feeling of absolute anguish that he was going without the diamonds pierced me. I threw myself in front of him again, and in some way, I can't tell you how, caught the handkerchief that covered his

face and pulled it down. There was the handsome visage and long mustache of Major Thatcher!

I backed away from him in the greatest confusion. He too blushed and looked uncomfortable.

"Oh, Major Thatcher," I murmured, "I beg your pardon! I'm so sorry. I don't know how it happened. I think the end of the handkerchief caught in my bracelet."

"Pray don't mention it," answered the major, "nothing at all."

Then we were both silent, standing opposite one another, not knowing what to say. It is not easy to feaze me, but it must be admitted that the situation was unusual.

"How is Mrs. Thatcher?" I said, desperately, when the silence had become unbearable. And the major

replied, in his deepest voice, and with his most abrupt military air:

"Ethel's very fit. Never was better in her life, thank you. Mr. Kennedy is quite well, I hope?"

"Cassius is enjoying the best of health," I answered. "He's out tonight, I'm sorry to say."

"Just fancy," said Major Thatcher. Then there was a pause, and he added: "How tiresome!"

I could think of nothing more to say, and again we were silent. It was really the most uncomfortable position I ever was in. The major was a burglar beyond a doubt, but he looked and talked just like a gentleman; besides, he'd dined with us. That makes a great difference. When a man has broken bread at your table as a respectable fellow

creature, it's hard to get your mind round to regarding him severly as a criminal. I felt that the only thing to do was to graciously ignore it all, as you do when some one spills the claret on your best table-cloth. At the same time, there were the diamonds! I could not let the chance escape.

"Oh, Major Thatcher!" I said, with an air of suddenly remembering something. "I don't know whether you know that your wife left a little package here that evening when you dined with us. It was for Amelia."

Major Thatcher looked at me with the most heavily solemn expression.

"To be sure," he murmured, "for Amelia."

"Well," I went on, trying to im-

part to my words a light society tone, "you know we can't find her. Very stupid of us, I have no doubt. But we've tried, and we can't, anywhere."

Major Thatcher stared blankly at the dressing-table.

"Strange, 'pon my word!" he said.

"So, Major Thatcher, if you don't mind, I'll give it back to you. I think, all things considered, it will be best for you to give it to Amelia yourself."

I went toward the dressing-table.

"You don't mind, do you?" I said, over my shoulder, as I opened the jewelry-box.

"Not at all, not at all," answered the major. "Anything to oblige a lady."

I drew out the sack of chamois

skin. "Here it is," I said, holding it out to him. "You'll find it in perfect condition and quite complete. I'm so sorry that we couldn't seem to locate Amelia. Not knowing the rest of her name was rather inconvenient. There were dozens of Amelias in the directory."

The major took the sack, and put it in his breast-pocket.

"Dozens of Amelias," he repeated, slapping his pocket. "Who'd have thought it!"

"We even advertised," I continued. "Perhaps you saw the personal; it was in the morning *Herald,* and was very short and noncommittal, but no one answered it."

"We saw it," said the major. "Yes, I recollect quite distinctly

seeing it. It—it—indicated to us—aw—aw—"

The major reddened and paused, pulling his mustache.

"That we hadn't found Amelia and still had the present," I answered, in a sprightly tone. "That was just it. And so you came to get it? Very kind of you, indeed, Major Thatcher."

The major bowed. He was really a very fine-looking, well-mannered man. If he only had been the honest, respectable person we first thought him I would have liked to add him to my collection. I'm sure if you knew him better he would have been much more interesting than the bishop and the lords.

"The kindness is on your side," he said. "And now, Mrs. Kennedy,

I think—I think, perhaps''—he looked at the window that gave on the balcony—''I think I'd better—''

''You must be going!'' I cried, just as I say it to the bishop when he puts down his cup and looks at the clock. ''How unfortunate! But, of course, your other engagements—''

I checked myself, suddenly realizing that it wasn't just the thing to say to the major. When you're talking to a burglar it doesn't seem delicate or thoughtful to allude to his ''other engagements.'' That I made such a break is due to the fact that I'd never talked to a burglar before, and was bound to be a little green.

The major did not seem to mind.

''Exactly so,'' he said. ''My time

is just now much occupied. I—er—I—"

He looked again at the window.

"I—er—entered that way," he said, "but perhaps—"

"I don't think I'd go out that way if I were you," I answered, hurriedly, "it would look so queer if any one saw you."

"Would the other and more usual exit be safe?" he asked. His eye, as it met mine, was charged with a keener intelligence than I had seen in it before.

"It would have to be," I answered, with spirit. "What do you suppose the servants would think if they saw you coming out of here? This, Major Thatcher, is my room."

"Dear me!" said the major, "I

suppose it is. I never thought of that."

"Wait here till I see if it is all right," I said, "and then I'll come back and tell you."

I went into the hall and looked over the banister. The gas was burning faintly, and a bar of pink lamplight fell out from the half-drawn portières of the drawing-room. There was not a sound. I knew the servants were all in the back part of the house, quite safe till eleven o'clock, when, if we were home, they turned out the lights and locked up. I stole softly back into my room. The major was standing in front of the mirror untying the handkerchief that hung round his neck.

"It's all right," I assured him, in

an unconsciously lowered voice. "You can go quite easily; I'll let you out. Only you mustn't make the least bit of noise."

He thrust the handkerchief in his pocket and put on his hat, pulling the brim down over his eyes. I must confess he didn't look half so distinguished this way. When the handkerchief was gone, I saw he wore a flannel shirt with a turned-down collar, and with his hat shading his face he certainly did seem a strange sort of man for me to be conducting down the stairs at half-past ten at night. If Perkins, who'd come to us bristling with respectability from a distinguished, evangelical, aristocratic family, should meet us, I would never hold up my head again.

"Now, if you hear Perkins," I

whispered, "for heavens' sake, hide somewhere. Run back to my room, if you can't go anywhere else. Perkins *must not* see you!"

The major growled out some reply, and we tiptoed breathlessly across the hall to the stair-head. I was much more frightened than he was. I know, as I stole from step to step, my heart kept beating faster and faster. Such awful things might have happened: Perkins suddenly appear to put out the lights; Cassius come home early from the dinner, and open the front door just as I was about to let the major out! When we reached the door I was quite faint, while the major seemed as cool as if he'd been paying a call.

"Very kind of you, I'm sure," he

said, trying to take off his hat. "I shan't forget it."

"Oh, never mind being polite," I gasped. "You've got the diamonds. That's all that matters. Good-night. Give my regards to Mrs. Thatcher."

And he was gone! I shut the door and crept up-stairs. First I felt faint, and then I felt hysterical. When Cassius came home at eleven I was lying on the sofa in tears, and all I could say to him was to sob:

"The diamonds are gone! The diamonds are gone!"

He thought I'd gone mad at first, and then when I finally made him understand he was nearly as excited as I. He went down-stairs and brought up a bottle of champagne, and we celebrated at midnight up in our room. We had to tell lies to

Perkins afterward to explain how we came to be one bottle short. But what did lies matter, or even Perkins' opinion of us? We were no longer crushed under the weight of one hundred and sixty-two diamonds that didn't belong to us!

That is the history of my connection with the case. From that night I've never seen or heard of the stones, nor have I seen Major or Mrs. Thatcher. The diamonds entered our possession and departed from them exactly as I have told, and tho my stateemnt may call for great credulity on the part of my readers, all I can say is that I am willing to vouch for the truth of every word of it.

Statement of Gladys, Marchioness of Castlecourt. : : : : : : : : :

Statement of Gladys, Marchioness of Castlecourt. : : : : : : : : :

I AM sure if any one was ever punished for their misdeeds it was I. I suppose I ought to say sins, but it is such an unpleasant word! I can not imagine myself committing sins, and yet that is just what I seem to have done. I couldn't have been more astonished if some one had told me I was going to committ a murder. One thing I have learned—you do not know what you may do till you have been tried and tempted. And then you do wrong before you realize it, and all of a sudden it comes upon you that you are a criminal quite unexpectedly, and no one is more surprised than you. I certainly know I

was the most surprised person in London when I realized that I— But there, I am wandering all about, and I want to tell my story simply and shortly.

Everybody knows that when I married Lord Castlecourt I was poor. What everybody does not know is that I was a natural spendthrift. Extravagance was in my blood, as drinking or the love of cards is in the blood of some men. I had never had any money at all. I used to wear the same gloves for years, and always made my own frocks—not badly, either. I've made gowns that Lady Bundy said— But that has nothing to do with it; I'm getting away from the point.

As I said before, I was poor. I didn't know how extravagant I was

till I married and Lord Castlecourt gave me six hundred pounds a year to dress on. It was a fortune to me. I'd never thought one woman could have so much. The first two years of our married life I did not run over it, because we lived most of the time in the country, and I was unused to it, and spent it slowly and carefully. I was still unaccustomed to it when, after my second boy was born, Herbert brought me to town for my first season since our marriage.

Then I began to spend money, quantities of it, for it seemed to me that six hundred pounds a year was absolutely inexhaustible. When I saw anything pretty in a shop I bought it, and I generally forgot to ask the price. The shop people were always kind and agreeable, and

seemed to have forgotten about it as completely as I.

After I had bought one thing they would urge me to look at something else, which was put away in a drawer or laid out in a cardboard box, and if I liked it I bought that too. If I ever paused to think that I was buying a great deal, I contented myself with the assurance that I had six hundred pounds a year, which was so much I would never get to the end of it.

After that first season a great many bills came in, and I was quite surprised to see I'd spent already, with the year hardly half gone, more than my six hundred pounds. I could not understand how it had happened, and I asked Herbert about it and showed him some of my

bills, and for the first time in our married life he was angry with me. He scolded me quite sharply, and told me I must keep within my allowance. I was hurt, and also rather muddled, with all these different accounts—most of which I could not remember—and I made up my mind not to consult Herbert any more, as it only vexed him and made him cross to me, and that I can not bear. All the world must love me. If there is a servant-maid in the house who does not like me—and I can feel it in a minute if she doesn't—I must make her, or she must go away. But my husband, the best and finest man in the world, to have him annoyed with me and scolding me over stupid bills! Never again would that happen. I showed him no more of them;

in fact, I generally tore them up as they came in, for fear I should leave them lying about and he would find them. If I could help it, nothing in the world was ever going to come between Herbert and me.

I also made good resolutions to be more careful in my expenditures. And I really tried to keep them. I don't know how it happened that they did not seem to get kept. But both in London and in Paris I certainly did spend a great deal—I'm sure I don't know how much. I did little accounts on the back of notes, and they were so confusing, and I seemed to have spent so much more than I thought I had, that I gave up doing them. After I'd covered the back of two or three notes with figures, I became so low-spirited I

couldn't enjoy anything for the rest of the day. I did not see that that did anybody any good, so I ceased keeping the accounts. And what was the use of keeping them? If I had not the money to pay them with, why should I make myself miserable by thinking about them? I thought it much more sensible to try to forget them, and most of the time I did!

It went on that way for two years. When I got bills with things written across the bottom in red ink I paid part of them—never all; I never paid all of anything. Once or twice tradesmen wrote me letters, saying they must have their money, and then I went to see them, and told them how kind it was of them to trust me, and how I would pay them everything soon, and they seemed

quite pleased and satisfied. I always intended doing it. I don't know where I thought the money was coming from, but you never can tell what may happen. Some friends of Herbert had a place near the Scotch border, and found a coal-mine in the forest. Herbert has no lands near Scotland, but he has in other places, and he may find a coal-mine too. I merely cite this as an example of the strange ways things turn out. I didn't exactly expect that Herbert would find a coal-mine, but I did expect that money would turn up in some unexpected way and help me out of my difficulties.

The beginning of the series of really terrible events of which I am writing was the purchase of a Russian sable jacket from a furrier in

Paris called Bolkonsky. It was in the early spring of last year. I had had no dealings with Bolkonsky before. A friend told me of the jacket, and took me there. It was a real *occasion.* I knew the moment that I saw it that it was one of those chances with which one rarely meets. It fitted me like a charm, and I bought it for a thousand pounds. That miserable Bolkonsky told me the payments might be made in any way I liked, and at "madame's own time." I also bought some good turquoises, that were going for nothing, from a jeweler up-stairs somewhere near the Rue de La Paix, who was selling out the jewels of an actress. It was these two people who wrecked me.

Not that they were my only debtors. I knew by this time that I

owed a great deal. When I thought about it I was frightened, and so I tried not to think. But sometimes when I was awake at night, and everything looked dark and depressed, I wondered what I would do if something did not happen. In these moments I thought of telling my husband, and I buried my head in the pillow and turned cold with misery. What would Herbert say when he found out his wife was thousands of pounds in debt—the Marquis of Castlecourt, who had never owed a penny and considered it a disgrace.

Perhaps he would be so horrified and disgusted he would send me away from him—back to Ireland, or to the Continent. And what would happen to me then?

That summer we went to Castlecourt Marsh Manor, and there my anxieties became almost unbearable. Bolkonsky began to dun me most cruelly. Other creditors wrote me letters, urging for payments. The jeweler from whom I had bought the turquoises sent me a letter, telling me if I didn't settle his account by September he would sue me. And finally Bolkonsky sent a man over, whom I saw in London, and who told me that unless the sable jacket was paid for within two months he would "lay the matter before Lord Castlecourt."

We went across to Paris in September, and there I saw those dreadful people. My other French and English creditors I could manage, but I could do nothing with either Bol-

konsky or the jeweler. They spoke harshly to me—as no one has ever spoken to me before; and Bolkonsky told me that "it was known Lord Castlecourt was honest and paid his debts, whatever his wife was." I prayed him for time, and finally wept—wept to that horrible Jew; and there was another man in the office, too, who saw me. But I was lost to all sense of pride or reserve. I had only one feeling left in me—terror, agony, that they would tell my husband, and he would despise me and leave me.

My misery seemed to have some effect on Bolkonsky, and he told me he would give me a month to pay up. It was then the tenth of September. I waited for a week in a sort of frenzy of hope that a miracle would

occur, and the money come into my hands in some unexpected way. But, of course, nothing did occur. By the first of October the one thousand pounds was no nearer. It was then that the desperate idea entered my mind which has nearly ruined me, and caused me such suffering that the memory of it will stay with me forever.

The Castlecourt diamonds, set in a necklace and valued at nine thousand pounds, were in my possession. I often wore them, and they were carried about by my maid—a faithful and honest creature called Sophy Jeffers. On one of my first trips to Paris a friend of mine had taken me to the office of a well-known dealer in precious and artificial stones who, without its being generally known,

did a sort of pawnbroking business among the upper classes. My friend had gone there to pawn a pearl necklace, and had told me all about it —how much she obtained on the necklace, and how she hoped to redeem it within the year, and how she was to have it copied in imitation pearls. The idea that came to me was to go to this place and pawn the Castlecourt diamonds, having them duplicated in paste.

I went there on the second day of October. How awful it was! I wore a heavy veil, and gave a fictitious name. Several men looked at the diamonds, and I noticed that they looked at me and whispered together. Finally they told me they would give me four thousand pounds on them, at some interest—I've forgotten

what it was now—and that they would replace them with paste, so that only an expert could tell the difference. The next day I went back, and they gave me the money. I do not think they had any idea who I was. At any rate, while the papers were full of speculations about the Castlecourt diamonds, they made no sign.

I paid off all my debts, both in Paris and London; I even paid a year's interest on the diamonds. For a short time I breathed again, and was gay and light-hearted. My husband would never know that I had not paid my bills for five years and had been threatened with a lawsuit. It was delightful to get rid of this fear, and I was quite my old self. I suppose I ought to have felt more

guilty; but when one is relieved of a great weight, one's conscience is not so sensitive as it gets when there is really nothing to be sensitive about.

It was after I had grown accustomed to feeling free and unworried that I began to realize what I had done. I had stolen the diamonds. I was a thief! It did not comfort me much to think that no one might ever find it out; in fact, I do not think it comforted me at all, and I know in the beginning I expected it would. It was what I had done that rankled in me. I felt that I would never be peaceful again till they were redeemed and put back in their old settings. That was what I continually dreamed of. It seemed to me if I could see them once more

in their own case I would be happy and care free, as I had been in those first perfect years of my married life.

The fear that at this time most haunted me and was most terrifying was that my husband might discover what I had done. His wife, that he had so loved and trusted, had become a thief! No one who has not gone through it knows how I felt. I did not know any one could suffer so. I went out constantly, to try and forget; and, when things were very cheerful and amusing, I sometimes did. And then I remembered—I was a thief; I had stolen my husband's diamonds, and, if he ever found it out, what would happen to me?

This was the position I was in when the false diamonds were taken.

It was the last thing in the world I had thought could happen. When, that night of the Duke of Duxbury's dinner, I saw the empty case and Jeffers' terrified face, the world reeled around me. I could not for a moment take it in. Only, in my mind, the diamonds had become a sort of nightmare; anything to do with them was a menace, and I followed an instinct that had possession of me when I tried to hide the empty case from my husband.

Then, when my mind had cleared and I had time to think, I saw that if they recovered the paste necklace they might find out that it was not real, and all would be lost. It was a horrible predicament. I really did not know what I wanted. If the diamonds were found, and seen to be

false, it would all come out, and Herbert would know I was a thief. When I thought of this I tried to divert the detectives from hunting for them, and I told that silly, sheepish Mr. Brison that I did not see how he could be so sure they were stolen, that they might have been mislaid. Mr. Brison seemed surprised, and that made me angry, because, after all, a diamond necklace is not the sort of thing that gets mislaid, and I felt I had been foolish and had not gained anything by being so.

The days passed, and nothing was heard of the necklace. I wished desperately now that it would be found. For how, unless it was, could I eventually redeem the real diamonds, and once more feel honest

and respectable? If I suddenly appeared with them, how could I explain it? Everybody would say I had stolen them, unless I invented some story about their being lost and then found, and I am not clever at inventing stories. As to where I should get the money to redeem them, I often thought of that; but never could think of any way that sounded possible and reasonable. I have always waited for "things to turn up," and they generally did; but in this case nothing that I wanted or expected turned up. Besides, four thousand pounds is a good deal of money to come into one's hands suddenly and unexpectedly. If it were a smaller sum it might, but four thousand pounds was too much. There was nobody to die and leave

it to me, and I certainly could not steal it, or make it myself.

So, as one may see, I was beset with troubles on all sides. The season wore itself away, and I was glad to be done with it. For the first time, there had been no pleasure in it. Anxieties that no one guessed were always with me, and always I found myself surreptitiously watching my husband to see if he suspected, to see if he showed any symptoms of growing cold to me and being indifferent. As I drove through the Park in the carriage these dreary thoughts were always at my heart, and it was heavy as lead. I forgot the passers-by who were so amusing, and, with my head hanging, looked into my lap. Suppose Herbert guessed? Suppose Herbert found

out? These were the questions that went circling through my brain and never stopped. Sometimes, when Herbert was beside me, I suddenly wanted to cry out:

"Herbert, *I* took the diamonds! *I* was the thief! I can't hide it any more, or live in this uncertainty. All I want to know is, do you hate me and are you going to leave me?"

But I never did it. I looked at Herbert, and was afraid. What would I do if he left me? Go back to Ireland and die.

We went to Castlecourt Marsh Manor in the end of June. By this time I had begun to feel quite ill. Herbert insisted on my consulting a doctor before I left town, and the doctor said my heart was all wrong and something was the matter with

my nerves. But it was only the sense of guilt, that every day grew more oppressive. I thought I might feel better in the country. I had always disliked it, and now it seemed like a harbor of refuge, where I could be quiet with my chilrden. I had grown to hate London. It was London that had played upon my weaknesses and drawn me into all my trouble. I had not run into debt in the country, and, after all, I had never been as happy as I was the two years after our marriage, when we had lived at Castlecourt Marsh Manor. Those were my *beaux jours!* How bright and beautiful they seemed now, when I looked back on them from these dark days of fear and disgrace!

It was not much better in the

country. A change of scene can not make a difference when the trouble is a dark secret. And that dark secret kept growing darker every day. I feared to speak of the diamonds to Herbert, and yet every letter that came for him filled me with alarm, lest it was either to say that they were found or that they were not found. Herbert went up to London at intervals and saw Mr. Gilsey, and at night when he came home I trembled so that I found it difficult to stand till he had told me all that Mr. Gilsey had said. Once when he was beginning to tell me that Mr. Gilsey had some idea they had traced the diamonds to Paris I fainted, and it was some time before they could bring me back.

July was very hot, and I gave

that as the cause of my changed appearance and listless manner. I was really in wretched health, and Herbert became exceedingly worried about me. He suggested that we should go on the Continent for a trip, but I shrank from the thought of it. I felt as if the sight of Paris, where the diamonds were waiting to be redeemed, would kill me outright. I did not want to leave Castlecourt Marsh Manor to go anywhere. I only wanted to be happy again—to be the way I was before I had taken the diamonds.

And I knew now that this could never be till I told my husband. I knew that to win back my peace of mind I had to confess all, and hear him say he forgave me. I tried to several times, but it was impossible.

As the moment that I had chosen for confession approached, my heart beat so that I could scarcely breathe, and I trembled like a person in a chill. With Herbert looking at me so kindly, so tenderly, the words died away on my lips, or I said something quite different to what I had intended saying. It was useless. As the days went by I knew that I would never dare tell, that for the rest of my life I would be crushed under the sense of guilt that seemed too heavy to be borne.

It was late one afternoon in the middle of July that the crash came. Never, never shall I forget that day! So dark and awful at first, and then— But I must follow the story just as it happened.

Herbert and I had had tea in the

library. It was warm weather, and the windows that led to the terrace were wide open. Through them I could see the beautiful landscape—rolling hills with great trees dotted over them, all the colors brighter and deeper than at midday, for the sun was getting low. I was sitting by one of the windows looking out on this, and thinking how different had been my feelings when I had come here as a bride and loved it all, and been so full of joy. My hands hung limp over the arms of the chair. I had no desire to move or speak. It is so agonizing, when you are miserable, looking back on days that were happy!

As I was sitting this way, Thomas, one of the footmen, came in with the letters. I noticed that he had quite

a packet of them. Some were mine, and I laid them on the table at my elbow. Idly and without interest I saw that in Herbert's bunch there was a small box, such as jewelery is sent about in. Thomas left the room, and I continued looking out of the window until I suddenly heard Herbert give a suppressed exclamation. I turned toward him, and saw that he had the open box in his hand.

"What does this mean?" he said. "What an extraordinary thing! Look here, Gladys."

And he came toward me, holding out the box. It was full of cotton wool, and lying on this were a great quantity of unset diamonds of different sizes. My heart gave a leap into my throat. I sat up, clutching the arms of the chair.

"What are they?" I said, hearing my voice suddenly high and loud. "Where did they come from?"

"I don't know anything about them! It's too odd! See what's written on this piece of paper that was inside the box."

He held out a small piece of paper, on which the creases of several folds were plainly marked. Across it, in typing, ran two sentences. I snatched the paper and read the words:

We don't want *your* diamonds. You can keep them, and with them accept our kind regards.

The paper fluttered to my feet. I knew in a moment what it all meant. The thieves had discovered that the diamonds were paste, and had returned them. I was conscious

of Herbert's startled face suddenly charged with an expression of sharp anxiety as he cried:

"Why, Gladys, what is it? You're as white as death!"

He came toward me, but I motioned him away and rose to my feet. I knew then that the hour had come, and tho I suspect I *was* very white, I did not feel so frightened as I had done in the past.

"Those *are* your diamonds, Herbert," I said, quietly and distinctly, "or, perhaps, I ought to say those are the substitutes for them. *Your* diamonds are in Paris, at Barriere's, *au quatrème,* on the Rue Croix des Petits Champs."

"Gladys!" he exclaimed, "what do you mean? What are you talking about? You look so white and

strange! Sit down, darling, and tell me what you mean."

"Oh, Herbert," I cried, with my voice suddenly full of agony, "let me tell you! Don't stop me. If you're angry with me and hate me, wait till I've finished before you say so. I've got to confess it all. I've got to, dear. You must listen to me, and not frighten me till I have done; for if I don't tell you now, I shall certainly die."

And then I told—I told it all. I didn't leave out a single thing. My first bills, and Bolkonsky, and the jeweler, and the pawnbroking place, and everything was in it. Once I was started, it was not so hard, and I poured it out. I didn't try to make it better, or ask to be forgiven.

But when it was all finished, I said, in a voice that I could hear was suddenly husky and trembling:

"And now I suppose you'll not like me any more. It's quite natural that you shouldn't. I only ask one thing, and I know, of course, I have no right to ask it—that is, that you won't send me away from you. I have been very wicked. I suppose I ought to be put in prison. But, oh, Herbert, no matter what I've been, I've loved you! That's something."

I could not go any further, and there was no need; for my dear husband did not seem angry at all. He took me, all weeping and trembling, into his arms, and said the sweetest things to me—the sort of things

one doesn't write down with a pen—just between him and me.

And I?—I turned my face into his shoulder and cried feebly. No one knows how happy I felt except a person who has been completely miserable and suddenly finds her misery ended. It is really worth being miserable to thoroughly appreciate the joy of being happy again.

Well, that is really the end of the statement. Herbert went to Paris a few days later and redeemed the diamonds, and they are now being set in imitation of the old settings, which are lost. I would not go to Paris with him. Nor will I go to London next season. Both places are too full of horrible memories. Perhaps some day I shall feel about

them as I did before the diamonds were taken, but now I do not want to leave the country at all. Besides, we can economize here, and the four thousand pounds necessary to get back the stones was a good deal for Herbert to have to pay out just now. And then it is so sweet and peaceful in the country. Nothing troubles one. Oh, how delightful a thing it is to have an easy conscience! One does not know how good it is till one has lost it.

This finishes my statement. I dare say it is a very bad one, for I am not clever at all. But it has the one merit of being entirely truthful, and I have told everything—just how wicked I was, and just why I was so wicked. Nothing has been

held back, and nothing has been set down falsely. It is an unprejudiced and accurate account of my share in the Castlecourt diamond case.

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